





300 SRT v HSV R8

Hemi-hitter tackles 400kW breeder bus

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Volkswagen Golf R







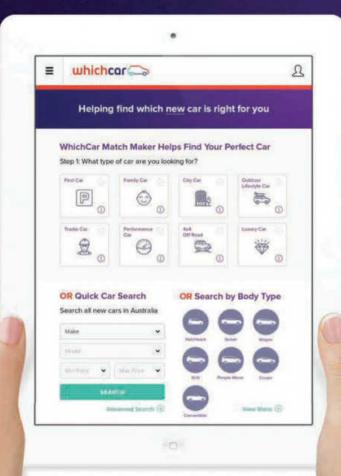




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The power. The passion.



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RX-7? Is that you?

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P1's baby brother IT'S THE 'cheaper' McLaren that's

anything but. And in an usual twist, it may be Woking's best model yet



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> DIGITAL DREAM TEAM Bonnie Jacks, Brendan Watts

Jason Cammisa, Daniel DeGasperi, Brian Makse, David Morley, Tim Robson, Jez Spinks, James Whitbourn
PHOTOGRAPHERS

Cristian Brunelli, Charlie Magee, Jurgen Skarwan, Thomas Wielecki, Brendon Wise

Dungeons & Dragons addict, footwear fetishist, art aficionado, glue eater



Georg Kacher, Michael Taylor

ADVERTISING MANAGERS

GROUP SALES MANAGER Matt Rice (02) 9263 9706 BRAND SALES MANAGER – MOTOR Liam Quirk (02) 9282 8348 VICTORIA Bruce Williams 0418 349 555 QUEENSLAND Todd Anderson (07) 3245 5049 SOUTH AUSTRALIA Nick Lenthall (08) 8212 6256 WESTERN AUSTRALIA Greg Boase 0408 516 176 NSW AGENCY SALES Max Kolomiiets (02) 8275 6486 VIC DIRECT SALES Joe Salanitri (03) 9567 4226 VIC AGENCY SALES Andrea de Kauwe 0409 117 675

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER Lynda Tordan ADVERTISING PRODUCTION Sanela Heeraman
CIRCULATION MANAGER Stuart Jones
MARKETING MANAGER Siobhan McNab
MARKETING ASSISTANT Maegan Kinson GROUP FINANCE MANAGER Richard Wein MANAGER BAUER DIGITAL Nigel Dearing DESIGN TEAM I FADER Danielle Readman BAUER TRADER CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
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Ed's notes

Dylan Campbell

What's so hard about making a modern turbocharged engine a little more exciting?

I'VE ONLY a layman's grip on the challenges facing engineers who design modern performance car engines. I suspect the emissions serpent is strangling modern engines' voiceboxes as much as airboxes. But artificial exhaust theatrics are becoming so pervasive, I'm encouraged to think, why can't new car engineers do more to make turbocharged engines more exciting? This is not an original thought, and it's one most car people, when exposed to new-gen turbo fast cars, will likely arrive at independently. Particularly if they've got any olderschool boosted cars with which to draw comparisons.

The new turbo-fied base Porsche 911 has an exhaust note familiarly flat-six, but with a more technical flavour. And it's quieter. But during a drive this month, we put the windows down and, when encouraged in the lower revs, a delicious and enthusiastic hiss was to be heard. Windows up, you'd have little acoustic clue a pair of angry BorgWarner snails are in the boot.

In the 1980s, F1 cars gulped jungle juice and slithered around on steam-roller rubber, as huge turbos hissed with rage. Group B is fondly recalled for its flame-spitting, screaming animals, turbos fluttering with frequently-reset throttles. I've owned at least one turbo road car with a similarly large personality and you can see the terror in my eyes whenever I recall what it was like to drive. I'm not saying car companies should make their new turbo models laggy; in fact I'm all for trying to make turbo engines respond as keenly as nat-atmo ones, but it's becoming increasingly apparent you can't engineer a nat-atmo personality. I can't help but wonder why engineers don't just give up and instead of trying to massage out the hiss, the flutter and the fury, engineer a little bit in. Much like active exhausts, it could even come with a button. I'd press it.



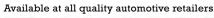








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What you'll find online this month



Video: XR8 v LSA R8

WE RECENTLY found ourselves at Heathcote with three of the latest Aussie muscle cars, so it would've been rude not to turn the cameras on and find out which is fastest down the quarter mile.

Regular motormag.com.au visitors will by now have seen the first part of the action, where Ford's Falcon XR8 swatted aside Holden's new VF II Commodore Redline like a fly. A 304kW/570Nm 6.2-litre V8 has closed the gap between these two traditional foes, but 335kW/570Nm of supercharged Miami V8 still asks a question the Commodore can't answer.

But, lo and behold, we happened to have HSV's new Clubsport R8 LSA on hand as well, so there was a chance for the General to regain some pride. Now on paper it's not a particularly fair fight, as the HSV is 65kW/100Nm up on its Falcon foe, but as we all know, Ford is a bit coy about how much power the XR8 actually produces, so perhaps it's better to look at it as a fight between two automatic supercharged V8s.

What wins? Well, both cars give their best with some of the fastest times we've managed from each, but to find out, meet us at **www.motormag.com.au**.

4 MORSEL-SIZED DIGITAL DELIGHTS



Video: Hot Tuner 2015Watch Luffy toast tyres in some of Hot Tuner's wildest entrants



In pics: LA Auto Show
All the news and reveals from the
latest motor show



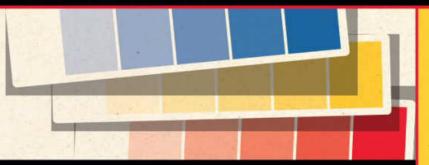
MINI Clubman S belted Regular MINI a bit too boring? Try the new Clubman on for size



Video: LaFerrari shuntHybrid hypercar bins it in Budapest
when driver loses control



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JANUARY 2016

The News

Hot stuff coming soon

158kW Fiesta

WRC OUTFIT M-Sport
has built the Fiesta RS Ford
won't, though sadly only
for the UK market. Outputs
increase to 158kW/320Nm,
put to the ground through
a Quaife limited-slip diff,
while Bilstein dampers and
Eibach springs take care of
the handling equation.
Your move, Ford.



331 kilometres per hour

Bentley's Outback V-max

FOLLOWING PORSCHE'S lead with the 918 Spyder, Bentley has used the Northern Territory's unrestricted highways to max out a Bentley Continental GT Speed, touring car legend John Bowe the man behind the wheel. ROAD CLOSED



"IT WAS THE RESULT OF HEAVY PARTYING AND NOT MUCH REST FOR 10 DAYS. I'M A BIT RUN DOWN"

F1 world champ LEWIS HAMILTON

'OOPS'. Surely that's also what Hamo was thinking when he crashed his \$3.2m custom Zonda into parked cars, at low speed, in Monaco late one November evening. No-one was hurt.



SLK55... V6?

AMG'S FIRST six-cylinder powered car (since the C32 AMG died in 2004) will debut at the Detroit Motor Show, the 3.0-litre twinturbo V6 SLC 450 a replacement for the current atmo V8 SLK 55 AMG. The engine is shared with Merc's other 450 'AMG Sport' models, however the new roadster will receive more power, in the region of 300kW/550Nm, as well as a louder exhaust and a more focused dynamic package.

New Bug not yet squashed

DESPITE FEARS VW's recent turmoil would lead to its cancellation, the Bugatti Chiron prototype has been spotted in both New York and Los Angeles undergoing testing.



Speed demons

VW AUSTRALIA has announced a recall of its MY2016 Scirocco R due to the speedo under-representing the actual road speed. Apparently between 100-180km/h you can be going faster than the speedo says — owners should contact their dealer.



Walky works up 547kW VF II

New LS3 SS package delivers a 547kW/880Nm punch to the face

THE VF II Commodore SS may roar louder thanks to its new 6.2-litre LS3 V8, but this Walkinshaw W547 package is the one to add big claws to the last-of-the-line local lion.

Talk about bang for your buck

- the supercharger kit costs a not
insignificant \$26,000, but it'll boost
power from Holden's new big-cube
V8 from an enjoyable 304kW/570Nm
to a mind-altering 547kW/880Nm.

In fact, the W547's 243kW/310Nm increase is virtually the equivalent of stuffing a whole 210kW/350Nm SV6 engine under the bonnet and makes this Walkinshaw's most potent Holden upgrade ever.

Now to the nitty-gritty. The supercharger kit features Eaton rotors, a heavy-duty belt drive, 12.0-inch intake runners, high-flow injectors, a water-to-air intercooler package, custom-moulded heater and intercooler

hoses, cast aluminium coil covers and a self-contained oil system. Also sitting beneath the engine cover (with W547 badging and individual build number, painted yellow for the first 50 buyers) is an upgraded camshaft, tougher valve springs and ceramic-coated headers, leading to an active catback exhaust.

Ouickly do the sums: the W547 package takes the price of a Holden SS Ute manual from \$40,990 to \$66,980 plus on-roads. That's still \$10K less than a Maloo R8 LSA, now the cheapest way into a supercharged HSV. But even a Maloo R8 LSA can 'only' dish up 400kW and 671Nm.

What the increased outputs can do to lower the 4.9-second

First 50 customers nationally will receive an invitation to a Walkinshaw Performance V8 Supercar ride day



0-100km/h of the regular SS falls down to how well the rear tyres can hook up with so many of Newton's finest trying to turn them into smithereens.

If you're talking the standard 245mm 18-inch tyres, we would say not much; with the 275mm-wide 19s of the SS V Redline there's more of a chance to close in on the 4.6sec time we've achieved from an LSA-equipped Gen-F2 Clubsport R8 LSA.

The upgrade doesn't include wheel, tyre or chassis modifications to your LS3-equipped Holden or HSV, which is a BYO affair.

New VF II SS, SS V or SS V Redline, and regular Maloo R8 and Clubsport R8 are eligible, likewise any VE/ VF HSV atmo. Walkinshaw will only match your remaining Holden or HSV warranty, though.

Walkinshaw insists the W547 has been created not with a power-overchassis mindset. Despite the lack of other upgrades it says the tuning of the blown V8 is such that it is liveable.

> "It's not necessarily about the power and torque, it's really about how well the package is put together and how well it drives," Walkinshaw Performance

Walkinshaw Performance general manager Tony Harris explains.

"With the launch of VFII it makes sense for WPP to release one of its most [potent] W Series packages yet."

Just as we think we've seen the biggest bang for the last-of-the-line locally-made VF Series II, more fireworks spray the way of enthusiasts to help crystalise this end to the home-grown performance era.





You need to know

Civic Type R axed for Australia



...THE number of Honda Civic Type Rs that are going to land on Australian shores. Local Honda fans have shed more tears in recent years than a VTEC engine spins revs, and they are likely to keep flowing.

The wild Civic Type R is officially off the radar for Australia due to timing issues, with the next-generation Civic sedan and hatch due to switch to a new generation mid-to-late next year.

Honda won't be able to secure the Type R until halfway through 2016, at



which point it will be a previous-gen model sitting in showrooms beside shiny new models.

We'd argue those buying the lairy 228kW/400Nm 2.0-litre turbo tearaway won't notice the old timers signing up for 1.8-litre base models, but the call has been made.

The big-winged hatch posted a Nurburgring time of 7:50.63, briefly winning the prize as the fastest front-driver around the famed circuit, though given the record-setting car had a roll cage, its legality was somewhat questionable.

On the upside, the current Type R is expected to have a short lifecycle – the nextgen hot-hatch has been spied testing and Honda Australia says it hopes to have that car here by 2017. Then we may finally be able to dry our eyes.



Meet the fastest factory Rex ever

Japan scores limited-edition 241kW Subie, but none for Oz!

POWER PEAKING at 7200rpm, torque swelling to 431Nm, trick adjustable suspension, Recaro buckets, wider tyres – this Subaru WRX STI S207 is a hardcore limited edition that fans will be lusting after.

Those cravings may require a patch on the arm, however, because this ultimate STI is a 400-unit special for the Japanese domestic market only.

Subaru Tecnica International has taken the flagship WRX and upped power and torque. The Japanese-market 2.0-litre turbo boxer fourbanger shifts from 227kW to 241kW and rises from 422Nm to 431Nm; the

latter spooling up and staying strong across 3200-4800rpm.

Output-boosting S207 exclusives include a twin-scroll ball-bearing turbo, quad performance exhaust with lower backpressure and a stronger silicon intake duct, as well as a revised ECU.

The figures also represent a handy increase over Australia's older 2.5-litre boxer, which makes 221kW/407Nm. Its 4.9-second 0-100km/h claim is no faster than the previous generation that utilised the same donk (and we've only achieved a 5.4sec sprint).

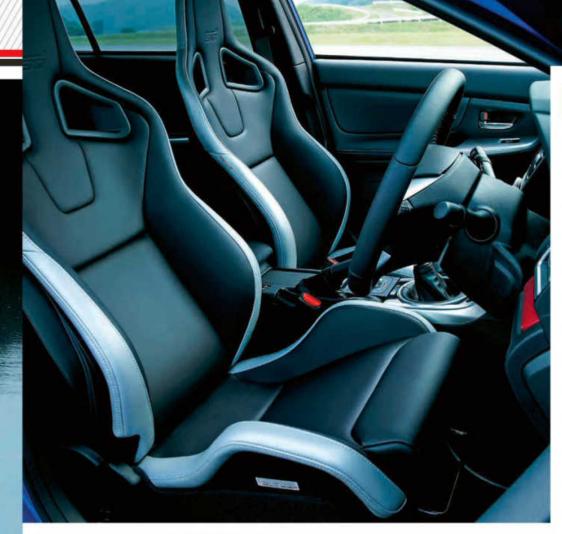
Locally, only the non-road-



Standard S207 is relatively subtle, but there's no mistaking the Nürburgring Challenge Edition's sense of purpose registerable NR4 motorsport edition uses the revvier Oriental engine, but it too lacks the S207 outputs that – with a high-rev clutch dump – could see this circuit special limbo into the mid-4s on the dragstrip.

To help it launch, the S207 dons 19-inch lightweight forged aluminium BBS alloys (one inch larger), while rubber is now 10mm-wider (255mm) and lower profile (40- down to 35-aspect).

Note the S207 badge is code for track-day special, so giant drilled rotors are gripped by Brembo calipers with six-pots up front and two-pots





at the rear.

The chassis is also reworked for corner work, with extra bracing for the front strut towers and both subframes. Pillow-ball joints holds in lateral rear suspension linkages, too.

A faster steering rack (11:1 ratio) guides the tighter nose, though that won't necessarily make for a harder ride because the S207 adds adjustable front Bilstein dampers. Front-to-rear torque vectoring also appears for the first time.

Inside, the main change is the addition of Recaro buckets. The tasty technical treats aren't left hidden from onlookers, either.

Particularly for a typically uncouth Rex, there's a subtlety and consistency

to the exterior changes – the mesh grille and rear diffuser, each with a red underscore, sets the tone for additional horizontal cues such as the lower front lip spoiler with black centre, matching the black lower side strip and door mirrors.

Choose the Nürburgring Challenge Edition – to commemorate Impreza's winning ways in the SP3T class at that famous track's annual 24-hour race – and a dry carbon spoiler appears. Only 200 will be made, half of them in Sunrise Yellow (there's otherwise WR Blue, White and Black to pick from).

Not that we get to choose anything. This is one STI we want to catch, but for now we can only hope the changes will filter to later production models.



Hip-hugging Recaro bucket seats are the main interior upgrade (Top)

You need to know

Bentley weighs up batterypowered bullet

322



KILOMETRES PER HOUR. That's what Bentley says its proposed new sports car will manage on electricity alone. It will be one of several productions of the recent EXP 10 Speed Six concept car, which received an overwhelmingly positive response from both press and potential customers at the Geneva Motor Show earlier in 2015.

While a more traditional version will be produced using the Audi-sourced 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 used in the Continental and Flying Spur, Bentley CEO Wolfgang Durheimer believes battery technology is now reaching the point where a purely electric performance sports car starts to make sense.

The car is some way off, with Bentley instead focusing on producing another, smaller SUV based on its forthcoming Bentayga, however the concept is based around a twin-motor model producing between 300-375kW.

Key to its performance, however, would be its immense torque, fed through a three-speed automatic gearbox for a 320km/h top speed and acceleration equal to the latest and greatest sports cars from Porsche, AMG and Aston Martin.

With Bentley focusing on money-making off roaders, however, its new sports coupe is unlikely to appear prior to 2020.

The News Hot stuff coming soon

by DANIEL DEGASPERI



Styling is more or less identical to its all-paw sibling, though the 19-inch alloys are a new design



Alcantara steering wheel is new, suggesting drivers will have sweaty palms taming 426kW





Rear-drive Lambo!

426kW Huracán is Sant'Agata's drifter

LAMBORGHINI HAS unveiled one of the most exciting cars of the year at the LA Auto Show, a rear-wheel drive version of its Huracán supercar dubbed the LP 580-2.

While much of the mechanical specification is identical to the all-wheel drive LP 610-4, the removal of the front diff and driveshafts promises to have a huge effect on how the baby Lambo drives.

The same aluminium-carbonfibre hybrid construction, shared with the Audi R8, underpins both cars, though the removal of the all-wheel drive system has saved 33kg, the LP 580-2 weighing in at 1389kg (dry).

The 5.2-litre naturally-aspirated V10 carries over largely unchanged, however as the name suggests power is down slightly, the LP 580-2 developing 426kW/540Nm compared to its all-paw sibling's 449kW/560Nm.

Also carried over is the sevenspeed 'Doppia Frizione' (dual-clutch) gearbox, while as with all MY16 Huracáns the V10 now has the ability to shut down one bank of cylinders when not required in an attempt to save fuel.

Despite possessing launch control, acceleration is slightly slower, the 0-100km/h sprint taking 0.2sec longer at 3.4sec, though that's likely due to traction difficulties rather than any power deficit. And it's these traction difficulties that make the LP 580-2 such a mouth-watering prospect.

While the all-wheel drive Huracán is brutally fast, its thrills come from its sheer speed, as its traction and lateral grip levels are more or less unbreachable on the public road.

For the LP 580-2 Lamborghini claims to have recalibrated its ANIMA

system – which controls steering weight, throttle response, damper stiffness and ESP calibration – "to provide oversteering characteristics, emphasising authentic rear-wheel drive behaviour."

To us, that sounds suspiciously like PR-speak for "no matter what the engineers tried they just couldn't stop the thing going sideways". Excellent.

That said, our last experience with a rear-wheel drive Lamborghini, the Gallardo LP 550-2 Balboni during Performance Car of the Year 2010, was a hair-raising experience, especially on track, due to the keenness with which the rear wanted to overtake the front. But then this is a mid-engined Italian supercar, so maybe it should be a bit scary.

The best news for baby supercar buyers, however, is the price. Australian pricing is still some way from being confirmed, but Lamborghini recommends a price of €150,000 for European buyers, a substantial cut over the regular Huracán's €169,500.

Apply a similar discount to the Huracán's \$428,000 local ask and the result is well under \$400,000, which would undercut the previous LP 550-2's \$409,500 and even promises a price below the Gallardo's original \$399,346 back in 2004. This would make the LP 580-2 the cheapest car in its segment, at least until the arrival of the McLaren 540C.

By focusing on fun, the Huracán LP 580-2 is a two-fingered salute to the current game of more power, more speed and more grip that has engulfed every segment from hot hatches to SUVs to supercars. Now all it needs is a manual gearbox option.

You need to know

Swansong Lancer Evo lands locally

150



THAT'S THE number of aptly named Final Edition Mitsubishi Lancer Evos that have arrived priced from \$53,700 plus on-roads. It closes off not only the Evo X that has sold virtually unchanged since 2008, but marks the end of the Evo series that began spraying dirt around 23 years ago.

Mitsubishi has at least ensured the Evo X Final Edition gets a boost. Outputs of the 2.0-litre turbo four rise 9kW/48Nm to 226kW/414Nm for the FE, and an old-school five-speed manual is the only transmission choice. It should help lower the 5.59sec 0-100km/h best we've achieved from the leggy manual.

The FE also delivers all the equipment that seven years ago was reserved for the \$72,000 Evo X MR, including 18-inch BBS wheels, Brembo brakes, Bilstein shocks with Eibach springs and leather-trimmed Recaro bucket seats.

Available locally in white, grey or red with black roof, or black with gloss black roof, each Evo X will be individually numbered AU0001 to AU0150 to go along with the Final Edition badging/colour-screen start-up/floormats.

Mitsubishi says the Evo's brilliant Super All-Wheel Control (S-AWC) system will live on in other sporty cars, likely SUVs. But sometimes evolution isn't for the better.

by DANIEL DEGASPERI

Hot stuff coming soon

Yamaha builds a car... and it's nuts

Forget the MX-5, this is a true lightweight sports car

FROM SEEMINGLY nowhere enters this cool Yamaha Sports Ride Concept, a Toyota 86-rivalling compact coupe with carbon construction underneath it and a big name behind it.

The 3.9-metre-long twin-seater weighs 750kg, which makes an MX-5 look overweight and an 86 appear obese. Despite the allure of highmounted exhaust pipes and a stubby bonnet, drivetrain details are absent.

Yamaha says the Concept is "designed to express a driver-machine relationship close in feeling to the world of motorcycle riding".

The company adds: "This design concept takes a uniquely Yamaha approach by putting the involved and active feeling of riding a motorcycle ... into a vehicle with quintessential sportscar proportions that adults can

enjoy in daily use."

It is designed by Gordon Murray, the man of ex-F1 fame (both in Formula One and then as main man behind the McLaren F1 and Mercedes-McLaren SLR supercars).

Murray runs an independent design studio that developed iStream chassis production; a manufacturing process aimed at making lightweight cars faster and more affordable. Until now a steel frame has been cloaked in glassfibre. For this concept, the design centre replaced that with carbonfibre.

This is Murray's first sportscar for the brand, following a hook-up with Yamaha two years ago with the Motive City Car Concept.

The Sports Ride Concept brings him full circle; the McLaren F1 of 1992 introduced carbonfibre construction



Yamaha concept is unlikely to make production as is, but the thinking behind it could revolutionise how cars are made to the production car world, the 2003 SLR also pioneered low-volume carbon manufacturing, and this Yamaha is the first time he's used carbonfibre since.

The process, two years in the making and now dubbed iStream Carbon, utilises "two carbon skins sandwiching a honeycomb core, unlike many expensive handmade supercars which employ monolithic (single skin carbon panels).

"The low cost investment and piece part cost of iStream Carbon components will enable it to be used in sub premium market segments," the design centre adds.

Murray claims iStream can cater for production volumes of between 1000 and 350,000 units per year, has a cycle time of 100 seconds per unit, requires









Simple but strong steel frame cloaked in carbonfibre helps keep weight down to 750kg

an 80 per cent reduction in capital investment by brands and 60 per cent decrease in manufacturing energy.

We may not know what powers the Sports Ride Concept, but it clearly is fuelled by Murray's belief that cars need to get lighter.

"Lighter weighting is the final frontier in the automotive industry's fight to lower emissions," Murray says. "A change in vehicle weight to enable downsizing of powertrain and components is all we have left."

Despite weighing around threequarters of an MX-5, Murray also claims the Sports Ride Concept "sets new standards for light weighting, rigidity and safety".

Yamaha is clearly interested in getting into the four-wheeled game, but there's no production announcement yet. We'd love a 750kg sports coupe right now, thanks.

"Lighter weighting is the final frontier in the auto industry's fight to lower emissions"

You need to know

Behold, the (new) fastest car in the world

9.4



SECONDS. That's all the time the new Hennessey Venom GT Spyder needs to complete the quarter mile, and it will be travelling 269km/h when it does so.

Responsible for this face-melting speed is a 1082kW 7.0-litre twin-turbo V8, an increase of 154kW over the previous Venom GT, which managed 435km/h at the Kennedy Space Centre in 2014. The extra grunt comes courtesy of retuning the engine for E85 fuel, which allows boost pressure to be raised from 19 to 26psi.

In a car that weighs just 1244kg, performance is unsurprisingly pretty staggering. From a standstill to 97km/h (60mph) takes 2.4sec, you'll pass 161km/h just two seconds later before thundering through 300km/h in 10.9sec and 400km/h in 18.1. Not many cars will send a Veyron home with its tail between its legs, but the Venom GT Spyder is one. On a perfectly dry surface, that is, and with a very brave driver.

Only a handful of these Texan tearaways will be produced and the price will be astronomical, but if you want the fastest – and most exciting – thing on four wheels then the Venom GT Spyder is your car.

If that's a bit too exciting, Hennessey can always do you a Mustang Convertible that can hit 335km/h, or how about a 485kW Ford F150 Raptor pick-up? God bless America.



AMG plots berserk E63

All-paw AMG E-class set for 450kW, nine-speed auto

AMG IS preparing to give the BMW M5 plenty of headaches with its new E63 set to deliver the biggest step forward in fast E-Class history, according to AMG boss Tobias Moers.

Speaking at the launch of the new C63 S Coupe (p40), Moers confirmed that the new E63, due for release later in 2016, will introduce a number of firsts, including a specially-developed all-wheel drive system and AMG-tuned version of Mercedes' latest nine-speed automatic.

The current W212 E63 is available in 4MATIC overseas, but the system is not able to be converted to right-hand drive. That's likely to change with the W213, the high AWD take-up rate in markets with both configurations making AMG question the need for a rear-wheel drive version at all.



While purists may baulk at the idea of an all-wheel drive muscle car, AMG boss Moers loves oversteer more than most and promises AMG's new all-wheel drive system will cater for "all the stupid things you do in rear-wheel drive." Merc's current 4MATIC system offer a 33:67 front:rear split, but we'd expect this to make way for



High-output version of AMG's 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 will appear in new E63 with around 450kW/800Nm an on-demand system a la Porsche 911 Turbo.

A twin-turbo V8 will remain under the bonnet, however the current M157 5.5-litre twin-turbo unit will make way for a high-output version of AMG's latest 4.0-litre mill. While adamant he is keen to avoid start a power war, Moers admits he can't build a car with less grunt than the 430kW/800Nm offered by the current E63 S. We'd expect 450kW/800Nm which, combined with all-wheel drive traction, will slash the 0-100km/h time to around 3.5sec.

The new-generation E-Class is expected to be revealed at January's Detroit Motor Show, with the new E63 set for a debut later in 2016. Australia's love affair with AMG doesn't look like slowing down any time soon.



FOCUS RS PRICED TO KILL

FORD HAS announced local pricing for its long-awaited new Focus RS, and the news is good. The Blue Oval's latest hatch hero will start from \$50,990, undercutting the likes of VW's Golf R (\$52,740) and Renault Sport Megane RS275 (\$52,990). Only Subaru's \$49,490 WRX STI is cheaper and it can't match the 257kW/440Nm Ford for performance (0-100km/h is a claimed 4.7sec) nor equipment levels, with bi-xenon headlights, Recaro seats, dual-zone climate control and Ford's SYNC2 infotainment system all standard. The only options are prestige paint (\$450) and 19-inch lightweight wheels wearing Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres (\$2500).

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The News

Hot stuff coming soon



Fiat's MX-5

Oz might get one with an Alfa 4C donk!

THE FIAT 124 Spider, the Mazda MX-5's Italian twin, has been unveiled at the LA Auto Show. Although the 124 is likewise Japanese-built, its 1.4-litre turbocharged four-cylinder is Italian made, producing 250Nm at 2500rpm and 119kW at 5500rpm on its way to a 6250rpm cut-out.

The MultiAir unit (from the 500 Abarth) debuts in a rear-drive application and pairs with a Mazda six-speed manual or torque converter automatic, not a Fiat/Alfa dual-clutch.

The 1105kg 124 Spider (manual) has stacked on 72kg over the 2.0-litre MX-5, but it also boasts 1kW/50Nm extra grunt.

The 124 Spider Classica uses the same 16-inch Yokohama Advan tyres found on the MX-5 (along with cloth trim, body colour A-pillar and

halogens), while the 124 Spider Lusso upgrades to 17-inch Bridgestone Potenza rubber and adds leather seats and dash trim, and extra chrome including on the pillars. Both get 'sports' suspension.

The Fiat adds a character crease over the door handles from the rear flanks, while the nose is higher, the rear haunches bulkier, the frontend styling an, erm, matter of taste. The only changes inside are interior handles, added door grabs and font for the gauges.

Australia may not score this standard 124 Spider, however. Fiat locally is awaiting the Abarth version, which will likely get a 177kW 1.7-litre turbo lifted from the 4C.

"It is going to be a true Abarth," promises Fiat Australia product





If you've sat in an MX-5 you'll know what to expect, bar the nstruments and massive Fiat badge on the wheel manager Aitezaz Khan. "Unique in character ... look at the current [Abarth] and pick some features around the product."

Whatever the badge, the 124 Spider is technically the first turbo MX-5 since the 1.8-litre engines in the 2002 SP (157kW/289Nm) and 2005 SE (121kW/206Nm), and an Abarth 124 may eclipse them both.

Elise reloads

Lotus revives the Sport nameplate

CALLING ANY Lotus product a 'Sport' might seem like stating the obvious, but that's exactly what you get with the MY16 Elise range. Both Sport and Sport 220 models drop 10kg to weigh in at 866kg and 914kg respectively, while engine ouputs carry over, the standard car producing 100kW/160Nm from its 1.6-litre four, while the 220 develops a healthy 162kW/250Nm from its 1.8-litre supercharged four. Australia pricing will be announced closer to its mid-2016 local arrival.





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JANUARY 2016

Send us your rant. Or something nice. Go on, it feels good

The Vent

Purge your rage

SPECIAL EDITION PULSAR WATCH

Watch out for our Letter of the Month winner Graeme, as he'll be looking sweet with this quad-dial Pulsar watch hanging from his wrist. From the stainless-steel construction to the black multi-dial face, the \$250 (RRP) PU2001X1 is the perfect partner in time. Features include a date and chronograph function, along with a two-year warranty, and it's water resistant to 100m.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Oi, down here

I COMPLETELY agree with Lenny (letter of the month winner, November 2015) that we small hatchback drivers risk extermination by high-riding SUVs.

As a counterpoint, though, I would mention an article in a 1970s motoring magazine which compared an Alfa Romeo Alfasud with the then current Volvo 240. Conclusion? The Volvo was large, heavy and built like a truck. The Alfasud, however, was small, light and could turn, brake and accelerate.

The article suggested the Volvo 240

would survive any collision between the two, but the Alfa Romeo Alfasud could avoid the collision in the first place. I think they called that active safety!

So, Lenny, don't worry too much – us ground dwellers will survive. From a Volkswagen Polo GTI driver.

Graeme, via email

We totally agree with you Graeme – it's best to avoid the bingle in the first place. And, like Mick suggests below, it helps to equip yourselves with proper skill, education and awareness.

Oi, still down here

DEAR Lenny (November, 2015), I'm sorry you feel scared inside your Golf GTI with an increasing number of SUVs on the road. Maybe you should try riding a motorcycle and see what it feels like to be at the mercy of all other vehicles, not just the larger ones.

I'd bet my left one that you would return to the safety-equipment-riddled confines of your hatchback in a heartbeat.

I'm not looking for sympathy either. My bike, like your hatchback, was a choice made because of the feeling I get when I find an empty backroad or mountain pass. I knew the risks involved before purchasing it and counter that by educating and up-skilling myself, by wearing the necessary gear and by maintaining my bike.

What I have found is that riding a bike has increased my awareness and respect for other vehicles.

Maybe then you will see that it's not only SUV drivers that you should be afraid of, but all other road users.

Mick Stephen, via email

What's the time?

DO YOU have lap times for all the cars you test at Winton/Wakefield Park, online? Or do I find them in the hardcopy? I want to do a check for active safety for our next family car and I figure lap times around those tracks will be a good indicator!

Andrew, via email Sorry, Andrew, we don't. However, most of our previous Peformance Car Of The Year and Bang For Your Buck tests have been at either of those two tracks. Check out Jan/Oct/Nov 2015 issues.

You've lost me

I'M sorry MOTOR, but after being a subscriber to your magazine for more than 20 years, next time my renewal comes around you've lost me. You can thank the demise of the Falcodore. The "last-ever comparo" just put the nail in the coffin.

I don't mind reading about Porsches, Aston Martins and other marques that I'll never be able to afford, but I flick past all the articles with the likes of VW Golfs , Renault Megane/Clio, etc, as they don't interest me in the least. Having more than 25 pages on the BRZ/86 does nothing for me, either. With less than a year 'til the Falcon finishes, and with sales at an all-time low, there's nothing anybody can do about it. It will be like parting with an old friend not getting my monthly MOTOR fix. Thanks for everything and good luck with the future after locally made cars. Rest in Peace Falcodore, lost but not forgotten!

Eric Waples, via email Well, that's a bit grim of you, Eric. Sure, we share your pain and aren't for a second pining for the Falcodore's demise. But we

MOTOR@bauer-media.com.au 1 motorofficial 2 motor mag

wonder if you're being a little too hasty in your departure from the new fast car scene. There's a growing appetite for reardrive muscle, that car companies would be remiss not to service. Which means there should be exciting stuff coming to 'replace' Falcon and Commodore (even if it'll never tug the heart strings quite the way Aussie-made metal did).

M2 or blown 86?

I'M pretty giddy for this era of compact performance. Not only have we been blessed with the 86 twins, of which I'm partial to the BRZ, I'm also looking forward to the M2.

Short wheelbase, six-speed manual, rear drive and a good lob of power. Part of me can't decide, though, a weapons-grade 86 with supercharger, or an M2?

From what the critics say, BMWs have tended to be a bit distant recently. Let's hope it's a return to form for BMW driver's cars.

Fabian, via email

That's more like it.

Undercover gun

I WAS recently at the Gold Coast spending a day at Movie World watching the stunt drive show at midday, and as the drivers were showing some of their handy work I could see one driver that looked suspiciously like Warren Luff. The hair and smile was a dead giveaway. It was highly entertaining getting to see Luffy doing some skids fresh off racing in the Gold Coast 600.

I thought I had seen the last of Luffy, but after the show there he was again seamlessly blending in with the crowd, watching one of the shows with the trademark cheeky smile. I should have asked him for an autograph, being one of the few there actually interested in V8 supercars and knowing who he was. But I thought it would be best not to while everyone was enjoying the Marilyn Monroe look-a-like perform.

Then again, after hitting a few of the rides there was a parade of comic book characters starting, and to my surprise one of the float drivers was sir Luff. I bet he didn't mention that part of the day job. He was dressed up in full police officer gear with an officer's hat and sunglasses to top it off, it made my day.

Unfortunately I don't have a photo for submission, but let me tell you it was most enjoyable seeing a driver of that calibre doing the hard yards. I was almost hoping for an epic powerslide while driving the float, but that might have been asking for too much. Keep up the excellent slides Luffy and hopefully it's not the last time I get to see you perform them in person at Movie World.

Matt Gatto, via email

Matt, thank you. He's ever the gentleman and a gun driver, but also an expert pisstaker. This story will come in most handy.

Out of fuel

WHOEVER said not to bother including fuel consumption figures in your stats list was wrong. Not just a bit wrong, but monumentally wrong.

The late *TopGear* mag had real-world usage figures in their long term loan cars. This was an excellent way to compare how efficient each car was when driven both enthusiastically and dawdling to the shops.

In the normal world it may be the Skoda Octavia RS versus a Commodore station wagon. Okay, we know which would be thirstier out of those two, but you get the idea. These are cars for which mere mortals are in the market.

Fuel efficiency/consumption is of major importance in a purchasing decision.

How clever am I? I have a machine that flies and only uses 6.0L/100km. Clever? I'm a friggin' genius.

Pete, via Facebook

Not sure what you're on about, Pete. We include real as-tested fuel consumption figures as often as we can — most often in The Garage, in fact. You can find plenty in Hot Source as well.

Launch control?

AS my go-to guide for all things cars, you might be able to help me out. Does the VF series II Redline manual actually have launch control? If so, how do you activate it?

Ben Pritchett, via Facebook

Yep, sure does. Clutch in, select Competitive mode, floor the throttle and revs spike to 4000rpm then drop the clutch... and waste a whole lot of time. Unless you're on a crazy sticky surface, launch control isn't the fastest way.

Two-wheel rage

IS IT just me, or are selfish two wheelers getting more and more precious these days?

Okay, part of me agrees motorcyclists should be able to filter through traffic, but are we going to really push 1.5m passing space for cyclists on Victorian motorists? I'm basically in the other lane for these rego-dodgers.

If we have to do these things, they should start regulating cyclists. Mandatory high-vis and lights to start.

Callum, via email

Bring 'em in

NOW that I've come to terms with Holden shipping off post-2017, can we start being serious about what's coming next?

No Insignia, and its weak turbo six, is ever going to equal an LS3-powered Commie, or the next best things – a Corvette C7 or Camaro SS. Wake up GM!

Geoff, via email



Sweet dream

We dream it. They build it.

illustration by BRENDON WISE words by MOTOR STAFF



Unhinging the S1's true personality

WE ARE big fans of Audi's mighty little S1. Its barrel-chested personality, wrapped in the A1's capsule-sized body, is a concept that breaks the mould for its class and stands out as a unique performance vehicle.

But we do find ourselves hung up on one thing. And that's Audi's tight leash on the S1's potential.

Its engineers would have spent

many late nights figuring out how to bolt an all-wheel drive system under an Al, and they dropped a 2.0-litre turbo four in its nose to complement the transplant.

Then, after all that, Audi de-tuned its big engine. Why in the world would it do that? We can only guess to keep it off the S3's heels.

But what if it was to also leave room for a truly unhinged 'RS'?

It would be easy to reap the extra performance an 'RS' badge demands from an Audi.

Since the go-fast bits already exist, you'd simply have to turn up the Sl's wick and add an upgraded cooling package.

And, to top off this new turn of speed, we think it should score a styling package to celebrate the Sl's Group B ancestry.



It would be easy to reap the extra performance an 'RS' badge demands from an Audi

Here's how we'd do it

WICKED UP

Thanks to VW's efforts with the Golf R400 concept, we know the EA888 within the S1 has the potential to produce as much as 294kW and 450Nm. Borrowing the larger turbocharger from the Golf R, the RS1 will align its figures closer to the S3, instead, producing 221kW and 420Nm – a lot more than the S1's 170kW/380Nm.

STRIP DOWN

With the help of wider guards, and thus wider tyres, the RS1 should be able to breach 100km/h from rest in less than five seconds and the quarter mile in 13-flat. That's using the same six-speed manual as before, which now uses upgraded bushes for better shift feel.

SUSPENDED BELIEF

Considering the S1's composure on road and track, its two-mode adaptive dampers will remain, however its lower control arms are now rose-jointed for better feel. Front brakes are now eight-piston jobs from the RSQ3 (why not).

WIDE LOAD

Injecting the necessary venom for an RS variant is a new gaping front grille. It's plugged with larger radiators as well. The guards are wider, to fit 245mm-wide tyres all 'round, and a bigger rear wing does its bit for downforce. The visual package also pays homage to the S1 Group B monster.

BOTTOM DOLLAR

At base price, with the only interior modification being Recaro Pole Position seats, the RSI asks for \$65,990. However, that can quickly grow with options like the Group B sticker pack (as seen here), rally wheels, competition fog lights and a rear seat delete with C-Pillar brace for attaching harnesses.



TEN CARS TESTED

FIFST Fang New. Fast. Driven.





Honda NSX

Our first taste of Honda's long, long, long-awaited hybrid supercar on road and track





Chevrolet Camaro

New Camaro is a big step forward over its predecessor. Sooo, why can't we have it?





488 Spider

Ferrari's 488 loses its head, and the result will make you lose your mind





AMG C63 Coupe

More than just a two-door sedan, AMG gets serious with its new killer coupe





HSV Maloo R8 LSA

A supercharged V8 ute might not make a lot of sense, but it sure is a lot of fun





Cayman GT4

Porsche's first mid-engined motorsport product is a track day triumph



Lexus GS F

Japan's sports sedan is where throwback and forward progress meet

ENGINE 4969cc V8, DOHC, 32V / POWER 351kW @ 7100rpm / TORQUE 530Nm @ 4800rpm / WEIGHT 1825kg / 0-100KM/H 4.6sec (claimed) / PRICE A\$150,000 (est)

N UNLIKELY player has picked up the naturally aspirated sports-sedan baton that's been cast aside by everybody from HSV to M Division to AMG. That player is Lexus. More precisely, Lexus's F division.

Nearly every manufacturer has abandoned the linear, responsive theatrics of the naturally aspirated engine, but Lexus insists it has ways to get a few more years out of it and still keep pace with the turbo terrors on (official) fuel consumption.

Yes, it's the RC F powertrain inside the GS bodyshell. but the F division has made that shell about 20 per cent stiffer thanks to a fair bit of scaffolding beneath the skin. The payoff are rear doors, five seats and a bigger boot than the RC F coupe.

It's going to land locally at about \$150,000, which will put it in somewhat of a no man's land. It's similar in price and power to a BMW M3, but half a size bigger and has the USP of that atmo engine.

Turbos or not, 351kW is no laughing matter. The issue is that in the softest

of the GS F's drive modes, it's almost invisible, such is the sophistication of the powertrain and quietness of the exhaust. For a car built to deliver character, it's not a good start, as it feels like it just doesn't have enough of it, at cruising speeds at least.

Find some more interesting topography and that soon changes. As you push the Lexus harder and harder, the engine goes from a heart-warming rumble to an assassin's scalpel to, at the outer limits, a bit player.

That's a tough critique of a motor so clever it can cruise in the Atkinson Cycle, undetectably shrinking the capacity by 800cc to save fuel. It's a big call for an oversquare engine that revs to 7300rpm and can push 1825kg to 100km/h in 4.6 seconds and on to a claimed 270km/h.

But that's how it is. The harder you push it, the more the handling becomes the star. It uses plenty of conventional go-fast bits, including Michelin Pilot Super Sport rubber (255/35 ZR19 up front; 275/35 ZR19s at the back) wrapping forged BBS alloys, carried by a multi-link rear

suspension and a double-wishbone front end. F also decided on one fixed rate for the springs and dampers - no fancy pants adjustable dampers here - though the front-end geometry is completely different to the stock GS.

But for all that, the star is clearly the torque-vectoring differential, with its open centre sandwiched between electronically-controlled planetary gear sets. It isn't just that it works, but that you can adjust how much it works – it even works when there's no torque pumping through it.

The handling doesn't shine in an MX-5 sense, largely because of the heft. Nor does it feel like a born athlete; instead it feels like one of those sportsmen who worked tirelessly to make the best of the talent they have, and you respect them all the more for it.

You can feel the car working hard beneath you to bring everything together in just the right mix. You can also feel the brain figuring out what you want, then telling the diff how to deliver it by cranking on one wheel or the other at the rear axle to make the



Like

Endearing engine note; handling; throttle response

Dislike Hefty sucker; m'ah interior; Predator cranky face



car yaw harder into a corner.

The rest of the chassis also shines brighter the harder you make it work. The brakes are strong, with six-piston monobloc calipers (questionably painted orange for the Australian market) clamping 380mm discs up front. They are firm and progressive without feeling soft.

The GSF carries a lot of mid-corner speed, but never feels nervous or fiddly when over-reaching for more. You can flow between apexes with smooth inputs or make it snap one way then the other and it doesn't seem to matter; the car will find a way to work with your style regardless. It also copes well with bumps, corners flat on its springs and behaves like an adult playing children's games by thinking its way through the challenges rather than trying to outmuscle them.

The drive settings include Eco, Standard, the noisier Sport mode; and Sport+. The latter loosens up the electronic fun police and pulls some assistance out of the power steering to deliver a deliciously communicative heft. Shamefully, you can't mix and match the settings to get the best steering without the not-for-politesociety exhaust note. Lexus insists this would have demanded a new control unit and relocated wiring under the bonnet, a space that is occupied by an all-alloy V8 that sounds, at its best, like an opera tenor doing heavy metal just for giggles.

The engine is a throwback to a time

As with most Lexuses these days, the looks will be an acquired taste, but it's hard not to love a big atmo V8 (right)



when big V8s did their best stuff above 4000rpm, not 2000rpm. And it's all the better for it, especially when the eight-speed Aisen transmission shifts (in Sport mode) spookily close to how you'd choose to change gears. It is, however, too enthusiastic for urban serenity.

The engine would feel a lot better if a few kilos were trimmed from the 1825kg kerb weight, without which you'd be able to jump into lane holes without worrying about dropping back a gear. Swing the tacho beyond 4500rpm and you don't need to worry about that anymore. The sound is deliriously enchanting, and up to the 7300rpm redline it lets you play on the noise pedal to adjust the car's cornering attitude.

It's incredibly accurate to throttle inputs and it's fast, without being frighteningly fast, and the sweetness

of its top-end power delivery makes it addictively enticing. An M3 will comfortably gobble it up on any given bit of road, but that's not the point. Would you come out of it feeling like you'd had more fun? Not likely.

The only real hiccup is the interior, which is a mix of expensive and mass-produced short cuts. Too many switches feel cheap, the multimedia scroller is awkward to use and the plastics in the lower dash are, err, ick.

You do, however, get a fully digital instrument cluster, a 12.3-inch multimedia screen integrated into the dash and a 17-speaker Mark Levinson surround-sound system.

More importantly, the seats are terrific to use, regardless of how you use them, which sums the GS F up entirely. It's all about how you feel as a driver. And it makes you feel very, very good.





Interior has all the toys but materials are hit and miss and the tracking pad multimedia controller is a right pain



The engine is a throwback to when big V8s did their best work above 4000rpm





Honda NSX

Short on confidence, but big on potential

ENGINE 3493cc V6, DOHC, 24v, twin-turbo, hybrid / POWER 427kW @ 6500rpm / TORQUE 646Nm @ 2000rpm / WEIGHT 1725kg / 0-100KM/H 3.0sec (est) / PRICE \$250,000 (est)

N THE years since the original NSX, Honda has been struggling to find its performance groove.

Not just a waste of time and money, the NSX's elongated gestation is a sign that Honda had a hard time figuring out what its own flagship should be.

But that's all water under the bridge. At last, we have a car - and some specs. A 3.5-litre dry-sump twin-turbo V6 revs to 7500rpm and makes 375kW and 500Nm, but thanks to a pair of front electric motors and a bigger, single electric motor mounted in the rear (much like the BMW i8's set-up) the NSX is good for a combined output of 427kW and 646Nm. No 0-100km/h claims yet, but with launch control and nine tightly-stacked gears in a dual-clutch 'box, expect the NSX to shuttle its battery-laden 1725kg to triple figures somewhere around the 3.0sec mark.

It's hoped the weight penalty is offset by the NSX's tech. Torque lag was a risk with 15psi boost, but the electric motors jump in at lower revs and gift the power delivery with an almost naturally-aspirated linearity. The front electric motors can also operate independently of engine and each other, offering true torque vectoring ability. Electric-only mode is also available, but Honda isn't saying what the car's range is yet. It's not a hybrid of the plug-in sort, either.

The interior at least is sumptuous and hardly feels related to a Jazz. The car has great straight-line grunt, and the electric motors work with the turbo donk to provide almost lag-free thrust – at lower revs at least. And the V6 sounds okay, even if it won't really have you winding down the windows in tunnels. But, like most hybrids, the NSX is dead silent when you fire it up and, after the first little while driving it on the road, we were a bit worried.

The steering won't be winning awards, bereft of feel and needing more work with the way it loads up, but Honda has engineering reasons why this is the case (to make all the





Track mode transforms the NSX from something mildmannered into an animal

tech in the front-end work). Still, not entirely confidence inspiring.

All-'round grip levels are low-ish, too, owing perhaps to the unusual decision to fit sporty, rather than racy, Continental ContiSportContact 5Ps (though the bewitching Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2s are optional). It was to make the NSX more daily friendly, Honda says. Instead you'll find understeer that arrives a little too early, and is not as easily fixable on the throttle as its torque-vectoring claims might lead you to believe.

'Try it in Track mode,' encouraged the engineers. So we did.

We hesitate to use the word transformed, but that's exactly the effect this mode has on the car, turning the NSX from something mild-mannered into an animal. Suddenly the engine barks an octave higher, the transmission borders on explosive and the chassis gains bite. It really is an entirely different car. In Track mode the NSX handles like an NSX ought to, mostly neutral but open to a sideways, corner-exit power-wriggle.

Still, the NSX is strangely unfulfilling. Its handling is sometimes inconsistent at the ragged limit, with the hybrid systems not able to keep up; the NSX defaulting for all intents and purposes to a rear-drive machine.

The engineers made a car to be stable and safe at the limit for novice drivers. They wanted it quiet enough so that it didn't attract dirty looks from pedestrians. They nailed their target. But it was the wrong target.

The NSX is what happens when the world's most rational car company builds the world's most irrational vehicle, a supercar. For entertainment purposes Honda should've built-in some more irrationality.

Yes, the original NSX was supremely liveable. But it also hid a wild side. Contrary to original impressions, there's nothing wrong with this NSX, except for that lack of confidence.

Apparently a quarter of the NSX's final tuning is still to be done before it goes on sale next year (late 2016 for Oz, for around \$250K) – so there's still time for some extra mongrel to be engineered into it, at least in any of its modes that aren't Track.

We're hoping, much like the case of Honda showing the world its new supercar way too early, that they've also let us drive it way too early.

Appropriately rich materials, perfect driving position and plenty of headroom make up for an unintuitive gear selector (left)



2016 Chevrolet Camaro

Aussie GM fans are missing out on muscle-car excellence

ENGINE 6162cc V8, OHV, 32v / POWER 339kW @ 6000rpm / TORQUE 617Nm @ 4400rpm / WEIGHT 1645KG / 0-97KM/H 4.0sec (auto, claimed) / PRICE US\$37,295 (manual)

HEN car makers grace us with something 'all new', more often than not there's a lot of carry over, whether it's the drivetrain or even the platform. The 2016 Chevrolet Camaro, however, really is all new, right from the ground up, which makes it a remarkable departure from the outgoing fifth-gen model which had its roots grounded in the 2006 Holden VE Commodore.

Starting with the state-of-the-art platform that underpins the upscale Cadillac ATS and CTS models, including their formidable V-branded performance variants, this new Camaro has got the fundamentals right. Suspension is MacPherson struts up front with a sophisticated five-link setup at the rear. Ford has made plenty of noise about the new Mustang's independent rear-end, but the Camaro has had such an arrangement since 2010.

Its exterior design is more modern, perhaps even more aggressive than before. To the casual observer, it also looks similar in scale to the outgoing model, but that's not entirely accurate. This Camaro is smaller in every dimension – height by 28mm, width by 20mm, and length by 57mm - and looks comparably more athletic and lithe, like a 15/16ths scale version of its former self. In addition, the chassis is 28 per cent stiffer than the old car. according to Chevrolet. Perhaps its design is not as iconic as the new Mustang's styling, but the look is unmistakably Camaro.

Its smaller proportions, combined with an aggressive mass-cutting program, result in a much lighter car than before. In RS trim, the overall package is 133kg lighter than the old car, and in SS trim with the monstrous V8, the Camaro rolls over the scales at 101kg less.

Inside, the cabin is thoroughly

STAR RATING

4.5

Like

Like Lovely V8; excellent auto; much improved dynamics

DislikeTerrible vision;
cramped interior;
not coming to Oz

modern and secondary controls are cleverly designed, while the driver interface is spot on. The steering wheel is the right size and shape, and situated perfectly for the driver, with excellent adjustability from both the steering column and driver's seat. Pedal placement is superb, too, facilitating heel-and-toe downshifts at your whim.

The smaller dimensions take their toll on the interior, however, as front seat occupants now sit closer to one another, and the rear seats have changed from barely usable to accommodating shopping bags only.

The three engine and two transmission choices are all brand new, too. The base powerplant in the LT model is a 205kW/400Nm 2.0-litre turbocharged four cylinder, while the volume RS model is the most high-tech of the lot – a 250kW/385Nm 3.6-litre V6 which is an excellent all-round mill. The show stopper of the



range is the 6.2-litre LT1 small-block V8 that makes a stonking 339kW and 617Nm, fitted exclusively to the SS.

As much as we love a good manual transmission, Chevy's developed a brilliant automatic that will satisfy the performance-minded driver. With eight speeds, upshifts that rival Porsche's PDK, and intelligent shift algorithms, this is the transmission of choice if you value lap times above all. For driver engagement, though, there is nothing better than the Tremec six-speed manual, with its excellent clutch take up, short throws, and satisfyingly hefty shift. Best of all, the shifter feels precise and durable, in stark contrast to the fragile feel of the Mustang's gear lever.

Large 345mm front and 338mm rear brake rotors, clamped by fourpiston Brembo calipers, are optionally available on LT and RS models and standard on SS. Brake feel is exceptional for a pony car, lending absolute confidence and control to the driver. Steering assist is electric, of course, and while both turn-in response and control are excellent, feel and feedback are slightly muted.

Available on the SS model are the latest generation Magnetic Ride





We can only hope that Holden's 2017 sports car matches the Camaro's talent

Control dampers, which are among the best adaptive dampers we've driven. Unlike many other systems, even those from premium makers, each damping mode is distinct and discernible by the driver, and when combined with the lighter, more rigid chassis, the dampers do an exceptional job of managing body and wheel control. Grip is remarkably high and the chassis does an excellent job of communicating the finer details of each contact patch. Clearly this chassis is the reason that the new SS is faster around a circuit than the outgoing, factory-tuned track special 1LE variant.

Unfortunately, Chevrolet has categorically denied any plans for a right-hand drive Camaro, despite the fact the platform is being converted for Cadillac exports. We can only hope that Holden's promised new V8 sportscar offers the same dynamic talent and muscle appeal on its release in 2017.

New. Fast. Driven.

Ferrari 488 Spider Maranello's latest drop-top joins the bucket list

ENGINE 3902cc V8, DOHC, 32v, twin-turbo / POWER 492kW @ 8000rpm / TORQUE 760Nm @ 6750rpm / WEIGHT 1420kg (dry) / O-100KM/H 3.0sec (claim) / PRICE \$526,888

URITY or perfection? By definition there is nothing wrong with the latter, however in performance car circles it is increasingly the former that is being mourned with each passing generation.

Can the two possibly co-exist? Unlikely. Not when the purists call for DIY gearshifts, minimal electronic interference and engines that breathe atmosphere and rev to the stratosphere; concepts at odds with engineering's demands for uninterrupted cog-swapping, unlimited grip levels and ever higher power figures with ever lower consumption and emissions.

For the first two-thirds of its 68-year history, Ferrari was the poster child for the no-frills philosophy, putting the driver first and foremost and to hell with the compromises. The release of the F1 transmission in the 355 was the first sign that a shy bird called progress had nested in Maranello, quickly followed by aluminium spaceframe construction (360), state-of-the-art electronic systems (430), clever all-wheel drive (FF), hybridisation (LaFerrari) and now, next-generation turbocharging.

This last step is arguably the most contentious of the lot, but installed in the back of the new 488 Spider, Ferrari's new 3.9-litre twin-turbo V8 goes a long way towards satisfying both purist and perfectionist. The superseded 4.5-litre naturallyaspirated V8 found in the 458 Speciale may have revved higher and screamed louder, but by any objective measure the new turbo engine is the superior powerplant.

Producing 493kW at 8000rpm yet summoning 760Nm from 3000rpm (though only in seventh gear thanks to each gear having its own torque map), even installed in the 50kg heavier Spider it matches the Coupe to 100km/h at 3.0sec and loses only three-tenths on the sprint to

200km/h, which disappears in 8.7sec on the way to a 327km/h top speed. In-gear acceleration bests its freebreathing predecessor by 25 per cent and fuel consumption is improved, however more important for our purposes is the improved throttle response (naturally, Ferrari has a graph to prove it).

And the noise? Well, suffice to say that above 4000rpm we can only assume that the exhaust certification authorities must have been on sick leave the day the 488 Spider was tested. Its racket is sufficient to have the ever-enthusiastic Tifosi demonstrating their appreciation whenever its eye-watering acceleration is unleashed on the roads between Naples and Palermo.

Eye-watering and unrelenting, thanks to the seven-speed dualclutch gearbox which swaps ratios effectively instantly, though Ferrari claims a blink-of-the-eye improvement over last year's model. Purists may yearn for a manual, but while three pedals and a lever may have been preferable to any iteration of the F1 gearbox up to 430 Scuderia, the 488 is too fast and the dualclutcher too polished for a manual to make sense. Whatever flaws the 488 Spider may have, the absence of a clutch pedal is not one of them.

Nor can any be found in the driving experience. With lid in place it's virtually indistinguishable from that of the Coupe, but 14 seconds is all it takes for that perception to change markedly. That's the time taken by the roof panel to stow itself (at speeds up to 45km/h) and the world to come alive. All of a sudden volume is up, temperature is down and the work rate at the wheel increases.

With windows up and wind deflector in place, it's no more blustery than the eye of a hurricane, but as v-max approaches eyes begin to blur with tears and hair becomes a living thing. The al fresco experience



Ferrari is on the crest of a wave right now and the switch to turbocharging hasn't slowed its charge one bit



satisfies every sense; the view of the sky above, the high-pitched hum of the 20-inch Michelins on the tarmac below and the pungent aroma of hot carbon-ceramics offering a connection to your surroundings no fixed-roof car can match.

Yet a Ferrari drop-top no longer need be a prima donna. Auto does a reasonable job of muffling that exhaust and shuffling through the gears with finesse, while the adaptive dampers deliver a ride capable of tackling all but the worst road surfaces. There's even 230 litres of luggage space with further storage capacity available behind the seats.

If ever there was a car that could meld both sides of the ideological divide, it's the Ferrari 488 Spider. By using the latest technology to support, rather than supplant, the goals of the driver it achieves what can only be described as very close to driving perfection. Mark it on the list as a car to try before you yourself pass on to the next generation.









What the 488 Spider achieves is very close to driving perfection





Mercedes-AMG C63 S Coupe

Fitter, faster, fatter C63 wants M4's blood

ENGINE 3982cc V8, DOHC, 32v, twin-turbo / POWER 375kW @ 6250rpm / TORQUE 700Nm @ 1750rpm / WEIGHT 1725KG / 0-100KM/H 3.9sec (claimed) / PRICE \$160,000 (est.)

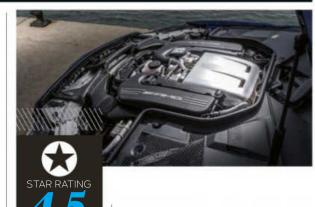
T WOULD be easy to dismiss the new C63 S Coupe as nothing more than a two-door version of its four-door sibling; a muscle car for the fashion-conscious. Not that there would be anything wrong with that, for such is the excellence of AMG's latest C63 sedan that you could scarcely blame the engineers for downing tools early and heading to the pub for a stein and bratwurst.

However, the crew from Affalterbach are an ambitious lot these days, and the desire for greater differentiation between the sedan and coupe C63 models has led to a fairly substantial re-engineering of the two-door's underpinnings. At the front there's 20mm of extra track and 10mm wider rubber (now 255/35) as well as new tuning for the electrically-assisted power steering.

But it's under those fat rear haunches that the greatest changes

have taken place. In fact, virtually nothing is shared between the rear axle of the coupe and sedan. Working from the outside in, the tyres are 10mm wider (now 285/35) wrapped around (optional) 20-inch rims and there's an extra 50mm of track. Around a dozen rubber mountings have been swapped for uniball joints and the lateral arms have been stiffened and repositioned to increase traction and response, while the electronically-controlled limitedslip diff has a shorter final drive to improve acceleration.

So have these changes resulted in a radically sharper C63? Well, no. While we've no doubt that back-to-back on road or track the coupe will assert its superiority, in isolation on unfamiliar Spanish roads the two-door feels very similar to the sedan, unsurprising when the two cars are so fundamentally alike. Perhaps the steering has a little more weight in



LikeFearsome engine

Fearsome engine; massively fast; beautifully resolved dynamics

DislikeGearbox could be better; looks a bit funny from behind

coupe than sedan, and maybe the two-door feels more keen to pivot mid-corner and drive off its rear axle, but we're talking small percentage changes here.

What is certain is that the new C63 S Coupe is a complete monster. Performance from the 375kW/700Nm 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 is shattering; 0-100km/h is claimed to take just 3.9sec (a 0.1sec drop over the sedan)



but it's the punch in third and fourth gear which is outrageous. Race mode engaged, the throttle response is unbelievable for a turbocharged engine, as is the linearity of the power band, while the noise emitted from the exhaust is volcanic.

The seven-speed MCT auto is much improved and left to its own devices in Sport or Sport+ will choose the right gear 99 per cent of the time, though manual selection via steering wheel-mounted paddles is also possible. On the road the standard steel brakes are more than sufficient, however the tireless stamina of the optional carbon front brakes make them a tempting, if pricey (\$10K!), proposition for track day fans.

While the engine is still the highlight of the new C63, its dynamics now run it a close second. The steering is excellent in both its weighting and response, giving immediate confidence to lean on the front end; grip levels are strong, yet the balance of the car is such that it can be adjusted with the brakes or throttle. Even better, Sports ESP is lenient enough to leave two black lines on the exit of every corner. Ride quality is reasonable, too; it's firm, as

is the sedan, but it's tolerable with good body control.

If there's one disappointment it's that weight has crept up by a fairly substantial 70kg over the sedan, primarily due to Mercedes' two-door bodyshells being heavier. A BMW M4 is almost 200kg lighter and more agile as a result, though the new C63 is an easier car to get to grips with.

As with the sedan, only the higher-grade 'S' model Coupe will be available in Australia, but pricing and specification levels are yet to be confirmed. If the sedan is anything to go by, most equipment will be standard and the price should be in the \$160,000 ballpark, though around 100 'Edition 1' variants will be available at a premium. In standard form, that will make the new C63 S Coupe the most expensive of all its rivals, however based on this first drive, it's also likely to be the best.

Aussie AMGs have the highest standard spec of anywhere in the world; C63 Coupe is likely to continue that trend







The C63 S Coupe is a monster... performance is shattering



For when you have to get to a job really, really fast

ENGINE 6162cc V8, OHV, 16v, supercharger / POWER 400kW @ 6150rpm / TORQUE 671Nm @ 4200rpm / WEIGHT 1887KG / 0-100KM/H 4.6sec (claimed) / PRICE \$79,490

A SUPERCHARGED V8 ute is as Australian as a kangaroo eating a meat pie, but mixing work and play to this extent hasn't traditionally been very successful. FPV's Miami-powered utes were barely guided missiles and HSV's Maloo GTS had all the power but little of the poise of the sedan.

The Gen-F2 Maloo R8 LSA is a Maloo GTS in all but name, though there are a few slight differences. A different intake and ECU tune restricts the Maloo LSA to 400kW/671Nm rather than the full 430kW/740Nm. and it also lacks the GTS's huge six-piston brakes, though with 367/372mm (front/rear) rotors and four-piston calipers all 'round the Maloo LSA still stops better than most.

But then it needs to, as the combination of 400kW and an 1887kg kerb weight takes some slowing. Tall gearing and a very linear power curve means the Maloo LSA doesn't immediately feel tear-your-headoff fast, but boy can it cover ground quickly. Sounds angry, too, though the choof emitted when the bi-modal exhaust opens is irritating.

The hard-working six-speed auto is

reasonably smooth and responsive in its behaviour, though it occasionally gets confused and slurs changes particularly the two-three shift - like it's seven pints in on a night out. Speaking of drinking, the 6.2-litre supercharged LSA V8 has a bigger thirst than Boony. It's okay while cruising, but on a country road burn you'll be looking at about 25L/100km. Going to a track? Bring a fuel tanker.

It'll be worth it, though, as the Maloo LSA is brilliant fun to drive hard. Performance utes are sometimes referred to as Australia's sports car and the shoe fits in this case. Okay, if you're stepping out of a Renault Sport Megane or Mazda MX-5 allowances have to be made for the Maloo's size. Likewise, the steering is not particularly talkative but the chassis is so friendly you'd have to do something drastic to mess things up.

Grip levels are impressive. Enter a corner too hot and understeer progressively builds but back off and the front quickly bites again, then the angle at which you exit depends on how much throttle you've applied. Feed it in gradually and there's plenty





vision; thirst for

fuel and tyres

of traction, but give it a bootful mid-corner and you'll need armfuls of opposite lock. The sweet spot is somewhere in between, with the rears spinning slightly faster than the fronts and the mildest degree of oversteer – it never gets old, though does take its toll on the rear tyres.

If driving is your thing, then the Maloo is more fun than its Clubsport sibling. Then again, \$80K is a lot of coin for a ute with only two seats and a 400kg load rating. Still, no-one is buying a 400kW ute because they need one, and the fact the Maloo R8 LSA is so good to drive is merely an excuse to work less and play more. That's the Australian thing to do.

Porsche Cayman GT4 Built for circuit work, and it shows

ENGINE 3800cc flat-6, DOHC, 24v / POWER 283kW @ 7400rpm / TORQUE 420Nm @ 4750-6000rpm / WEIGHT 1340KG / O-100KM/H 4.4sec (claimed) / PRICE \$189,900

MARK WAUGH, Ralf Schumacher, Malcolm Young. In most families they'd be the success story, rightly held aloft as an example of the child that 'did well'. Unfortunately for them, while immensely talented in their own right, they happen to have siblings named Steve, Michael and Angus who capture the lion's share of the plaudits and adulation.

Porsche's Cayman must know how they feel. One of the world's finest sports cars by any measure since its 2005 introduction, it's never quite managed to extract itself from the shadow of its rear-engined older brother, until now. The Cayman GT4 is the first mid-engined product from Porsche's motorsport department and can finally put to rest the eternal question: what would the Cayman be like with a 911 engine in it?

The engine in question is a 3.8litre unit lifted from the Carrera S producing 283kW/420Nm, which sends power to the rear wheels through a six-speed manual gearbox. The result is 0-100km/h in 4.4sec, a 295km/h top speed and a howl to raise the hairs on the back of your neck. Massively long gearing -

130km/h in second! - blunts its edge somewhat and also limits the number of excuses to use the superb manual 'box, but the engine itself is fantastic, though without quite the top-end ferocity of the GT3.

But it's not the highlight of the Cayman GT4. No, as ever, it's the chassis that shines brightest, but the GT4 operates on such a higher plane compared to the rest of the Cayman range it almost deserves its own model line. With the front-end lifted from the 911 GT3 combined with a bespoke rear-end setup, grip levels are staggering and yet it never feels glued to the road or inert.

The car is alive with feedback and the brakes worthy of particular mention. Another straight lift from the heavier GT3, they are tireless and combined with the manual's auto-blip function allow you to dive deeper



into corners than you ever thought

Our first taste of the Cayman GT4 was limited to a handful of laps of Phillip Island, yet the ease with which it can be driven fast enough to challenge and reward means we have no hesitation in awarding it the perfect score as a track day machine. Whether this talent will transfer to the road, we'll find out in a future issue.

Interior is perfectly tailored for the task of going fast with plenty of Alcantara



Like Searing engine; unbelievable dynamics; brilliant

We have no hesitation in awarding the GT4 the perfect score as a track day machine





Caterham Seven 485

Plenty of thrills, but bring your skills

ENGINE 1999cc inline-4, DOHC, 16v / POWER 177kW @ 8500rpm / TORQUE 206Nm @ 6300rpm / WEIGHT 675KG / 0-100KM/H 3.9sec (claimed) / PRICE \$116,990

OUR PREVIOUS experience with Caterham's 485 wasn't, erm, very positive. Put simply, we didn't feel the driving experience justified the substantial \$116,990 price tag.

After all, there are some very talented rivals like the Porsche Boxster and Alfa Romeo 4C at this price point, which demand nothing like the level of compromise required with the Caterham.

However, we're re-visiting the 485 as there's been a notable change to its standard specification, as well as the opportunity to run it down the strip to try and validate Caterham's eyewidening 3.9sec 0-100km/h claim.

The crucial component in question is a limited-slip differential and it promises to be an important piece of the Caterham puzzle. Whereas previously power could be fizzed away by the unloaded inside wheel, now the 485 can be steered almost entirely with the throttle, particularly in the streaming wet conditions of our track test.

It takes a lot of concentration, as



STAR RATING

3.0

Like
Old-school raw

Old-school raw driving thrills; LSD now standard; novelty

DislikePrice; practicality;
quality issues

with no electronic aids of any kind – not even ABS – you're completely on your own in a car that will easily wheelspin through the first three gears and can be tricky to catch when it does slide. The corollary of this, of course, is the buzz that results from knowing you alone are in control.

It's up to the driver to correct every locked brake and spike of oversteer; no other car offers the same connectedness as the lightweight, unassisted 485. It's hard work, but very rewarding and would undoubtedly be easier on a dry track. Or a dry, warm track, at least, as performance testing the 485 at a dry but cold Heathcote drag strip was heart-in-mouth stuff. With the highly tuned 177kW/206Nm four pushing just 675kg (sans driver) the Caterham fires off the line like it's been stung, but continues to slither and slide all the way to the top of third gear.

The bad news for Caterham, however, is there is simply no way a 485 is going to do 0-100km/h in 3.9sec, let alone the 3.4sec claimed for the smaller, lighter UK cars. With a clean launch and a 63kg driver, the buzzing Brit clocks 0-100km/h in 4.8sec and a 13.1sec quarter mile; the latter particularly impressive given it includes four gearchanges.

The thing is, though, a 13-second run in a 485 is much more thrilling than an 11-second run in a 911 Turbo, which sums up the whole Caterham experience. It's madly compromised and expensive, but it's a car every enthusiast should try at least once. With less power and grip, it might even be more fun. Stay tuned.

by JEZ SPINKS

Audi TTS Coupe

Range-topping sportster trades comfort for speed

ENGINE 1984cc inline-4, DOHC, 16v, turbo / POWER 210kW @ 6200rpm / TORQUE 380Nm @ 1800rpm / WEIGHT 1385KG / 0-100KM/H 4.7sec (claimed) / PRICE \$99,900

TTS ISN'T a chemical abbreviation for testosterone, though it would be an apt one for the more steroidal version of Audi's sharply handsome coupe.

We've already learned the third-generation TT is the most dynamically capable version yet, and with the Golf R/S3 drivetrain under the bonnet... Well, excuse us if we approach the new S-badged version with some anticipation.

If the TTS can serve up the Golf R's fun in a sexier, two-door body we'll be laughing, though not necessarily all the way to the bank. The TTS costs almost double, starting at \$99,900 for the coupe (or from \$103,900 for the drop-top). Equipment levels have increased, but it also drops it right into Porsche Cayman territory.

The typical TTS buyer who prioritises performance almost as much as design won't be disappointed, though. TTS Mk2 puts its 45kg-lighter kerb weight, uprated 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo engine and faster-acting quattro system to good effect by knocking six-tenths off its predecessor's 0-100km/h claim.

You'll need a Cayman S that costs \$40K more and still needs the optional Chrono Pack to match that

4.7-second pace.

The TTS's dual-clutch auto certainly wastes no time snapping through its six ratios – at its quickest in Dynamic mode, where flat-out upshifts are also accompanied by delicious exhaust pops.

Using the paddles still brings the best response from the drivetrain, though third and fourth gear almost become exclusive on a driver's road – trading on the engine's tenacious torque that peaks from 1800rpm to just 100rpm shy of where peak power of 210kW sets off at 5300rpm.

Veering off the straights and into corners, the TTS displays greater agility than its predecessor. Understeer isn't entirely eradicated, but the TTS is now more inclined to adopt a neutral mid-corner stance with a right-foot pedal adjustment.

That adjustment can go in either direction, but don't expect power oversteer despite the latest-generation Haldex system's ability to pre-emptively load extra torque to the rear wheels when it detects sharp turn-in. The TTS's quick steering also helps direct the coupe into corners with more immediacy, and you can also carry speed confidently into



corners under trailing brakes.

There'd be greater involvement if the steering wasn't so introverted, though the helm scores well for consistency and accuracy.

There's no need to wait for a twin test to determine where the TTS sits dynamically in relation to the Cayman, though the Audi can still claim some high ground with its sharply cut exterior, quick pace and a stunning cabin that marries high quality with high tech.

A question just lingers over whether the base TT is actually the sweetspot in the range. With a ride that deteriorates badly over rough roads, the TTS's beefed-up suspension may be a lesson in the perils of spending too much time in the gym.

New TT interior is superb, with its clean design, clever TFT dials and intuitive operation



A question just lingers over whether the base TT is actually the sweet-spot in the range





Peugeot 208 GTi

More power and extra kit for facelifted Frenchie

ENGINE 1598cc inline-4, DOHC, 16v, turbo / POWER 153kW @ 6000rpm / TORQUE 300Nm @ 3000rpm / WEIGHT 1160KG / 0-100KM/H 6.8sec (claimed) / PRICE \$29,990

YES, YES, we all know that Peugeot made the 205 GTi, and it was good. Very good. The company has never forgotten how to make a hot hatch – it's, well, occasionally chosen not to. The 208 GTi has been around since August 2013, and it's only been moderately successful on a sales front, hampered by no auto option in a competitive market.

Earlier this year, the 208 GTi 30th Anniversary Edition hit showrooms in limited numbers, and sported a few juicy extra mechanical bits which turned the already very good 208 into a tarmac terrier par excellence. Peugeot has plucked the uprated engine from that car and bunged it in the stock GTi. Result? More power (up from 147 to 153kW) and torque (275 to 300Nm). Now we're talking.

The 208's basic suspension architecture – struts up front and torsion bar in the rear – stays, along with the stiffer bushings, shorter and stiffer springs, wider track, revised dampers and larger anti-roll bars that came with GTi version 1.0. Seventeeninch rims wear 205mm-wide Michelin tyres, and the brake rotors

are now larger, too.

Inside, red highlights run riot throughout the cabin. The front seats are heavily bolstered, and the steering wheel is a tiny 300mm in diameter. For this 185cm driver, the dash display-over-steering wheel arrangement (known as the i-Cockpit) presents no viewing issues, but for drivers of more average height, the high dash binnacle may be more of a problem.

The 208 GTi went a long way towards rediscovering that magic Pug hot hatch formula, and version 2.0 just gives you a little more. It offers a firm, yet controlled and nimble ride over even the worst road surfaces, and while the electric steering is a little numb, the little hatch grips and turns almost telepathically, with a sweetly sinuous amount of roll.

All of the controls are perfectly balanced, and the new 1.6-litre turbo THP 208 engine is a revvy peach of a unit, with torque on tap right across the rev range and a scintillating yet unobtrusive engine rasp. Brakes, too, are firm and beautifully modulated.

At \$29,990, the Pug 208 GTi is up





LikeGrunty engine;
enjoyable ride/
handling balance;
well equipped

DislikePolarising driving position; very strong rivals

against stiff, cheap competition. The Fiesta ST is \$4000 cheaper, while the Renault Sport Clio and the VW Polo GTI can be had with self-shifting transmissions, if that kind of thing is important to you. The standard equipment list for the Pug is high, though, including a spare wheel and an excellent sat-nav-equipped infotainment touchscreen set-up.

The 208 GTi is a very good little car made a little better with the new powerplant, and it perfectly encapsulates the everyday hot hatch philosophy so richly illustrated by its 30-year-old sibling.





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- 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011.
- Dodge Avenger 2.7-litre V6, Dodge
- Journey 2.7-litre V6 people mover, 2009
- Dodge 3.3-litre Grand Caravan
- Chrysler Sebring 2.7-litre V6 (Sedan and Convertible),
- Chrysler 3.3-litre Town & Country 2008

• GMC 5.3-litre Savana, GMC 5.3-litre

- . Chevrolet 5.3-litre Avalanche,
- . Chevrolet 5.3-litre Suburban.
- Ford 4.6-litre Crown Victoria
- Ford 5.4-litre F-150.
- Nissan 5.6-litre Armada, 5.6-litre Titan

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PHOTO FEST SEMA 2015



ONE: RETRO RIDE

It's more associated with modified excess, but SEMA also plays host to some old-school cool, like this Brock Racing Trans Am Datsun 510.

TWO: LEADING THE AUSSIE CHARGE

On the Garrett stand, this boosted V6 Mustang was crammed with Aussie parts from Turbosmart, Whiteline, DCI heatshields and XForce.

THREE: FORD MUSTANG COBRA

Ford's motorsports division unveiled its new Cobra Jet drag car, taking the hassle out of running eight-second passes. Yours for US\$99,000.

1 2 3















2 1

3

ONE: ACCUAIR BMW i8

It undoes the many hours BMW engineers spent on perfecting the i8 package, but Accuair's idea to airbag the eco supercar looks delicious.

TWO: SAVINI WHEELS GT-R

Shield your eyes. This modified and wrapped Nissan R35 GT-R is so reflective that if driven on a sunny day, it'll be a rolling, blinding, disco ball.

THREE: RWB PORSCHESA bevy of Rauh-Welt Begriff's signature wide-body air-cooled Porsches looked like a selection of candy. Brightly coloured and very tasty.

FOUR: SKID SHOW

Ford's Out Front area let punters climb aboard sideways demonstration runs in all sorts of machinery, including Raptors and Mustangs.

FIVE: TOYOTA UUV

When manufacturers try to fit in at SEMA, this happens: the Ultimate Utility Vehicle. A Toyota people-mover built for the apocalypse.

SIX: TRUFIBER CORVETTE

America's finest sportscar bolted with Japan's craziest body-style pieces? It'll stir bowtie diehards, but proves an interesting culture clash.

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STREET STANDARD NISSAN 240SX: THE BOSS FROM THE EAST

TALK about cultural fusion. This creation from Street Standard was actually a Nissan 240SX wearing a snub-nosestyle mask from Rocket Bunny. The Rocket Bunny bodykit, called 'The Boss' by Japanese creator Ken Miura, replaced its front fenders, front bumper, grille, and added the company's

trademark rivet-on guards, which gifts the Japanese coupe a face similar to Plymouth's 1970 Barracuda. To back up this bolt-on attitude, Street Standard also tucked a hulking 402ci LSX underneath its new bonnet along with two turbochargers. The result? Apparently more than 745kW. Sheesh.

january 2016 motormag.com.au







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ONE: DSPORT FIESTA ST

DSPORT revamped this Fiesta's turbocharger set-up to have something the size of a bumble bee produce 300kW. No wonder it has a roll-age

3

TWO: CHEVROLET SILVERADO

America's taste for big things shines bright at SEMA, where trucks sometimes sport the most extensive modifications.

THREE: MAD MIKE'S MX-5

En Zed's famous drifter, Mad Mike, is known for building scary Mazdas. His twin-turbo quad-rotor MX-5 is no different, producing around 900kW.

FOUR: TRUEFIBER MUSTANG

One way to wake up the performance of the new Mustang is to strap two great turbos to its V8. And with wider guards, it'll need the extra tyre.

FIVE: NISSAN MURANO

Someone thought 34-inch wheels would cure the Nissan Murano Crosscabriolet's aesthetic woes. It seems two wrongs don't make a right.

SIX: AGAINST THE GRAIN

Not everything at SEMA is wildly modified; sometimes the best results come from exercising a little bit of restraint.

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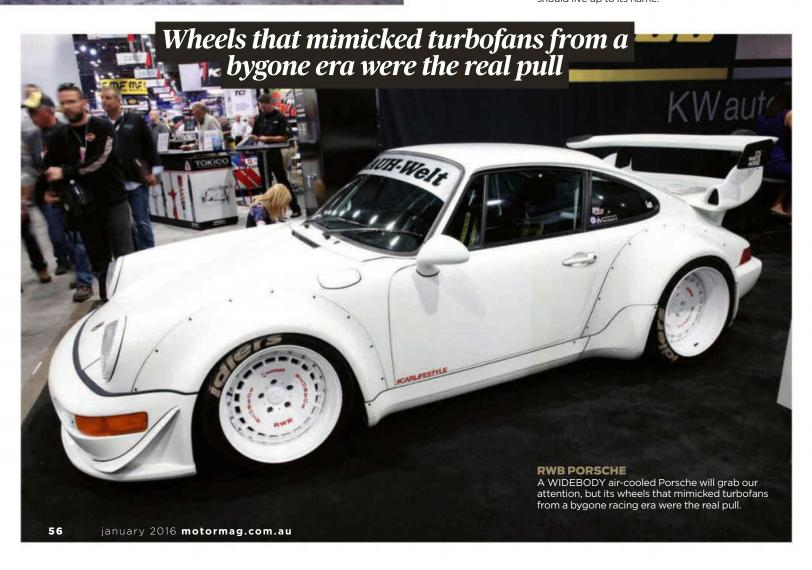
ONE: CAMARO RED LINE Part of a new line of trim packages, Camaro Red 3

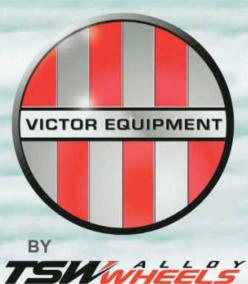
rears very easily.

Lines in the USA will score lowered springs, new brakes, an air-intake kit and red trim inserts.

TWO: SCION RACING 86 With the help of tuning gurus GReddy, Scion, America's Toyota, plonked a 672kW Supra engine in this drift 86's nose. Should turn the

THREE: 2016 CHEVROLET COPO Chevrolet calls it the 'king of the quarter mile'. And with a blown 5.7-litre V8 matched to a threespeed automatic transmission, the NHRA racer should live up to its name.





BADEN

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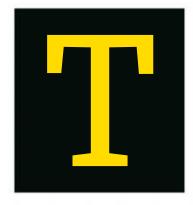
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HEWORLD is a funny place. Prior to 1997 the only thing a Porsche 911 needed to keep cool was a steady breeze over its finned mechanical undercarriage. But then they went and ruined everything with the 996 whose engine was dressed in a layer of

coolant and in whose front bar, like gnashed teeth, lived a pair of new radiators.

Nobody had seen such an arrangement in a 911 before and it was decried as an intruder - the end of an era. To an extent, it was.

But while many purists loved to hate the 996, many learned to appreciate it for what it was: a better car.

Since then it's only become better to the point that, the most recent 991 911 Carrera S (we're focusing on the S as it's the one we've driven most for this review) is quite a sweet thing.

You got to know the tacho quite well in the 991 Carrera S. Its 3.8-litre naturally-aspirated flat-six made 294kW at 7400rpm and 440Nm at 5600rpm. It was certainly on the peaky side and an engine you had to rev out to get the best from. But that was never a chore, as the noise it made on the way to its 7800rpm redline was truly something.

But they're the good old days now, because a change

water cooling, even if it hasn't got purists up in arms quite so much.

The old 3.4 and 3.8 engines are gone, replaced with a new twin-turbo 3.0-litre unit in two tunes for Carrera and Carrera S.

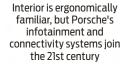
Compared to the old S, power is up 15kW to 309kW at 6500rpm, but torque is the big one, a 60Nm increase to 500Nm available from 1700rpm to 5000rpm.

The base Carrera, meanwhile, has a different ECU tune, a 2mm smaller compressor wheel and runs less boost - 13psi to the S's 16 - and you're looking at 272kW and 450Nm.

The new S's V8-matching glut of lowdown torque is interesting when you consider the previous Carrera S didn't make its peak torque until 5600rpm. Redline is down from 7800rpm to 7400rpm. Boo, yes, but it's not as significant a cut as could've been. Porsche has toiled hard to make this engine behave as naturally aspirated as possible.

The noise is one of the biggest departures from the NA car - it's certainly different. It was always going to be tough matching the old NA noise given it was one of the better sounding engines around, full stop.

For a start the new car seems quieter, but with the taps fully open it bellows a note about an octave lower and one a bit more technical than mechanical. It's still recognisably Porsche flat-six, just not quite as







Styling changes limited to new front and rear bars, revised tail-lights, a new louvered engine lid and even front active aero flaps







New rotary dial on the steering wheel borrowed from the 918; controls damping, throttle response and ESP functions





And the new car certainly doesn't sing its way to redline like the old one; in fact you don't saviour the final 1000rpm like you did the old car because it's just not the same event.

Turbo fans, though, will enjoy the BorgWarner-supplied whistle available at low rpm with the windows down, but perhaps more, they'll dig the extra muscle – the Carrera S is a car whose swollen mid-range torque you surf, rather than whose punch you need to rev out every gear to get.

There's a flexibility about the engine the old NA car couldn't hope to match. In fourth gear at 3000rpm? No problem – boot it, give it a fraction for the turbos to spool, and you're boogying. You had to bang the old car down a few gears to get the same effect.

And the new turbo Carrera S is fast. It's not quite bordering-on-scary explosive like its 911 Turbo big brother, but it'll still push you back in the seat and have you paying attention. The power is smack bang in the Goldilocks zone.

Launch control and short-ish first and second gears help it to 100km/h in 3.9sec, or 0.2sec faster than the old car. The base Carrera, armed also with launch control and PDK, hits the tonne in 4.2 seconds on its way to 293km/h.

Either way you look at it, both cars are seriously fast, particularly when you consider the 996 911 Turbo did 0-100km/h in a (probably conservatively) claimed 4.2 seconds. That's progress for you.

Porsche says turning Carrera S turbo has saved 1.0L/100km,combinedconsumptionnow7.7L/100km.

Our test car said we were doing 26.9L/100km – mind you, the driving was, err, especially enthusiastic.

Don't blame us, the Carrera S is remarkably well sorted, much like the old car, and it's serious fun up a twisty road. The 911 really is one of the best handlers around and the 991.2 is no different – it's got its scheisse together.

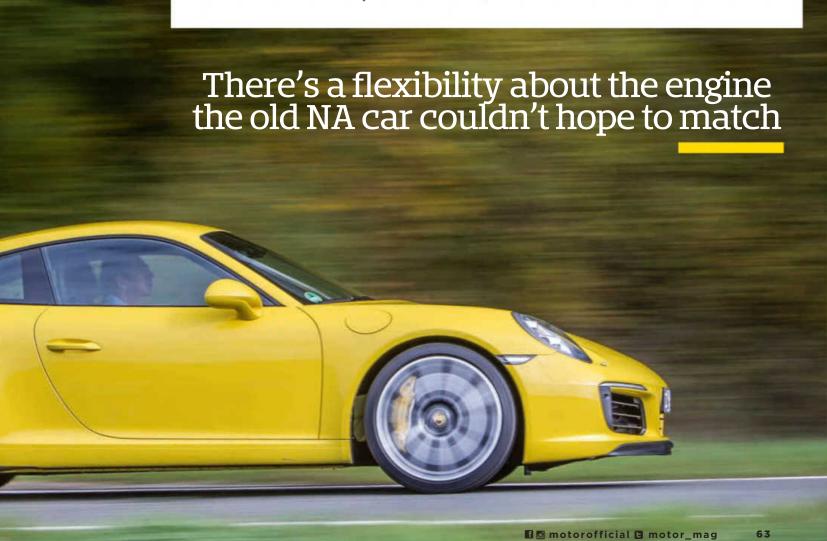
The steering is accurate and honest, the damping spot-on and it even rides sweetly. As an all-round product, the Carrera S is super impressive.

That's not mentioning the bullet-fast, responsive and faultless PDK 'box, the nigh-on perfect driving position and impressive interior quality, either.

In the upcoming comparison European correspondent Herr Kacher talks about the biggest change to the 911's interior (changes *MOTOR* readers care about): a little rotary knob that's grown like a wart to the steering wheel, marking a move of the car's personality-buttons from its centre stack to the tiller.

Borrowed from the 918, aside from the usual offerings of a Normal mode, Sport and Sport Plus, the big news here is Porsche has gone the way of Audi in allowing punters to customise settings in a new Individual mode. It's more helpful than the function of the knob's middle button, which tenses the car in full pounce mode for 20 seconds with an accompanying countdown timer in the instrument binnacle TFT screen. It's one of those things you use once, then never again.

And it's worth mentioning all-wheel steering is now available for the Carrera and is standard in Australia.





The turbo Carrera S feels less highly-strung than the old car, more relaxed, yet potent as hell and just as fast

Strangely, aside from making U-turns easier, it hasn't seemed to have had the same transformative effect on the entry-level models' cornering performance as it has on GT3 and Turbo.

The prices are a reasonable change, at least in Australia, as well. When it arrives in March next year, \$217,800 will be your cheapest ticket to a turbo base-911, and that's for the entry-level, seven-speed manual Carrera coupe. It's \$252,800 for the same car in S guise. The manual Carrera cabrio will be \$239,300, the S cabrio \$274,300. PDK, on any model, is an additional \$5950.

Across the board prices are up by between \$7500 and \$9800 (the biggest increase is on base, manual Carrera) but Porsche will point out its Active Suspension Management (adaptive dampers), previously a \$4000 option, is now standard across the board.

It's interesting, though, how much a smaller engine and turbos can change a car. The 911 is still a cracking, impressive, satisfying and easy car to drive fast. Few other cars scratch the driving itch like a 911, and that's still the case.

But turbos have changed its personality from a car than once sung its lungs out at high rpm like some opera singer – a car whose neck you had to half wring – to something just as fast, if not faster, but a little more mature in the delivery.

The turbo Carrera S feels less highly-strung than the old car, more relaxed, yet potent as hell and just as fast – in fact, as the numbers attest, faster. Certainly, if nothing else it's made the 911 more useable and, in the process, perhaps a more appealing car to a broader audience than the old one.

It's an outstanding car. If the tacho suddenly turned into a clock it'd just take you a little longer to notice. \square



PORSCHE 911 CARRERA S

BODY	2-door, 2+2-seat coupe		
DRIVE	rear-wheel		
ENGINE	2981cc flat-6, DOHC, 24v, turbo		
BORE/STROKE	91.0 x 76.4mm		
COMPRESSION	10.0:1		
POWER	309kW @ 6500rpm		
TORQUE	500Nm @ 1700-5000rpm		
POWER/WEIGHT	203kW/tonne		
TRANSMISSION	7-speed dual-clutch		
WEIGHT	1520kg		
SUSPENSION (F)	struts, A-arms, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar		
SUSPENSION(R)	multi-links, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar		
L/W/H	4499/1808/1295mm		
WHEELBASE	2450mm		
TRACKS	1542/1519mm (f/r)		
STEERING	electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion		
BRAKES (F)	350mm ventilated discs, 6-piston calipers		
BRAKES (R)	330mm ventilated discs, 4-piston calipers		
WHEELS	20.0 x 8.5-inch (f); 20 x 11.5-inch (r)		
TYRE SIZES	245/35 ZR20 (f); 305/30 ZR20 (r)		
TYRE	Pirelli P-Zero		
PRICE AS TESTED	\$258,750 (PDK)		
RATING			

Kacher's two cents

'Love at first drive? Yes - and no'

THE emotional left side of the brain is fire and flames for the benefits of progress. The logical right side of the brain, however, is not entirely convinced. For a start, some of the noises the new Porsche makes are irritatingly different. The way it unravels grunt and urge is notably less spectacular, too.

I'd give this car four out of five stars, personally. I love it for its looks, its capability, its supreme dynamics and its street cred. By bolting in some turbos, Porsche has also made the base 911 work over a wider range than before.

But I almost think it's too sensible for a 911, and its ride and composure on rough roads leave a little to be desired.

Older 911s were raucous, howling tools demanding an almost digital driving style: boot it, brake hard, knock it down one or two gears, grab it by the scruff and turn in, easy on the throttle toward the apex, then full berries all over again.

The GT3 is still sort of like this.

It's wild but still a figure skater of sorts, a little loose but yet, when it matters, still a modicum of control and stability.

In contrast, this new turbo-fed Carrera prefers corners of a wider radius, its bitumen to be more billiard smooth, and wants for a more balanced tempo. Don't get me wrong, this is a wonderful car in its own right. You may still play silly chump when you must, or want to, but this is a 911 for grown-ups.

By that I mean it still serves up speed in satisfying dollops and offers a precise and progressive drive — an intuitive interaction between input and response. It's not only quicker than the 991 and more frugal, but it's more rewarding to drive if you prefer fluidity, style and tactility to brashness, mongrel and bravado.

Especially when compared to the last-of-line 991 911 GTS, the new turbocharged Carrera S is less of a hardcore sportscar and more of a wiry grand tourer. – **GK**







by GEORG KACHER pics CHARLIE MAGEE

Boost Brothers

Two of our favourite two-doors have turned to turbos, but which manages its boost best?









OMETHING is indeed working its way up the mountain. Germany's Lowenstein ranges hunker in the morning stillness, not unlike ourselves as we sit on a road that ends at a construction site. Company is unlikely. But we are expecting.

Down in the valley a murmur turns to a dim growl, which grows into a bark that's discernible – if you know your cars, that is.

Two cars; one is clearly a V8 and the other an old friend. Porsche's 911 is more than 50 years old now, but the entire time it has made more or less the same racket – one a trained ear can spot swirling up a German valley.

Yet while the sound is familiar, it's different just the same. Like a kid whose voice you've known, but then he turns 13 and it drops an octave.

Today our new 911 Carrera S is joined by a hairy-chested AMG coupe. Born in Stuttgart but educated in Affalterbach, the exhaust note has a little of the old school about it. But more so, the new C63 Coupe lets out a modest displacement growl instead of a bigblock burble, higher in pitch by virtue of its forced induction, rather than the old cam-in-head gurgle. Still, it's recognisably V8.

Plonk both these two-door missiles on a drag strip and it'll be a dead heat to 100km/h, both claiming 3.9sec sprints.

But that's pretty much where the similarities end. The engines sit at opposite ends of the car, and themselves count different cylinders and displacement. One's attached to a super-responsive twin-clutch, the other a lazier, more conventional auto. Then there's the fact one was created as a sportscar from the word go, while the other is, at the end of the day, a variation of what is the most popular taxi in Germany.

By way of street cred, a comparison necessitates asking where you do your mainies. Up Wall Street the 911 will get more nods, but if you're Bathurstbound, you'll make more mates in the C63.

It's at the Mercedes dealer that the envy and admiration comes a lot cheaper. The C63 S Coupe will cost about \$160,000 (price hasn't been confirmed yet) to the 911 Carrera S PDK's \$258,750.

A higher top speed aside (309km/h versus 290km/h), the extra dough means you will be

supporting less of the Middle East economy in the 911, its 7.7L/100km better than the Merc's 8.9L. But you'll have to screw a block of wood to the throttle pedal's backside if you want to get anywhere near those claims.

With its more humble origins C63 is the more practical of the two, able to accommodate 206cm of Georg in relative comfort



Not too long ago, both these cars were heroes of natural aspiration. Where the old 991's 3.8-litre flat-six revved like mad, the original C63's legendary M156 6.2-litre donk dished up a torque tsunami of sorts. But emissions pressures have forced both cars to turbos and fewer cubes, with the promise of more poke for less thirst.

It is the Porsche's engine that has undergone the greatest personality change. While the C63's new 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 still cranks out the torque – and a satisfying V8 soundtrack – the mildly turbocharged Porsche has evolved from something a little hoarse and hungry for revs to an engine with manners and plenty of flexibility.

Power is up 15kW to 309kW, but where the torque curve of a Carrera S used to ramp up with all the aggressiveness of a beginner's ski slope, these days it's more Himalayan, a plateau of 500Nm – an increase of

AMG swears the C63 S Coupe has been set up to offer maximum speed and traction, but its preferred cornering stance suggests otherwise





Laying down all the C63's muscle can be a challenge for the rear tyres, and the driver

60Nm – is all yours from 1700rpm to 5000rpm.

Diesel-locomotive levels of low-down torque is a party trick of the Merc, too. In C63 S guise (all that's coming to Australia) we're talking 700Nm from 1750 to 4500rpm, and 375kW. A 205kg weight penalty against the Porsche is reason why the C63 S, despite the extra 200Nm, doesn't smoke the 911 in a race to the national speed limit, not to mention its engine isn't exactly sitting over a driven axle. But still, the Porsche will need PDK and Sport Chrono (with launch control) in order to keep the big AMG honest.

It's when the road starts to bend that the C63 is the more entertaining, and frustrating, drive. Laying down all that muscle can be a challenge for the driver as much as the rear tyres, and with the ESP on, you could have as much fun in a C450. But ESP in Handling mode changes the C63 from a punk in hoodie and trackie-dacks to getting out the boxing gloves. And ESP Off, well, if you're not wide awake you quickly will be.

On paper the Porsche looks hampered by a potentially even-more-ill-fated dynamic weight

distribution, yet it hangs on with more skill and corners with greater determination. The bad news is it needs a bigger stage to excel; it'll cheerfully switch from understeer to oversteer if you clobber the throttle, but the process takes a little longer than the AMG and demands a heavier right foot.

The new ESP Sport Handling mode, at least, knows when you've got it all under control and leaves you be. Yet it'll step in if it all gets a bit loose.

Both cars could sound better, too. Once upon a time car companies couldn't fit mufflers big enough to these kinds of cars, but now it's the other way around. In this company there's no shortage of fake throttle blipping, computer-controlled upshift blats and artificial lift-off fireworks, yet given customers are going for optional sports exhausts, it seems it's what the masses want.

These days, too, many sportscars try to make everyone happy, being able to tootle to the shops one second and then devour a set of tyres on a track the next. This manifests itself in buttons, and the Porsche is the latest to join the party with its manettino-like



The specsThey make 'em tough in Germany

	PORSCHE 911 CARRERA S		MERC-AMG C63 S COUPE
BODY	2-door, 2-seat coupe	BODY	2-door, 4-seat coupe
	rear-wheel	DRIVE	rear-wheel
ENGINE	2981cc flat-6, DOHC, 24v, turbo	ENGINE	3982cc V8, DOHC, 32v, twin-turbo
BORE/STROKE	91.0 x 76.4mm	BORE/STROKE	83.0 x 92.0mm
COMPRESSION	10.0:1	COMPRESSION	10.5:1
POWER	309kW @ 6500rpm	POWER	375kW @ 5500-6250rpm
TORQUE	500Nm @ 1700-5000rpm	TORQUE	700Nm @ 1750-4500rpm
OWER/WEIGHT	203kW/tonne	POWER/WEIGHT	217kW/tonne
TRANSMISSION	7-speed dual-clutch	TRANSMISSION	7-speed automatic
WEIGHT	1520kg	WEIGHT	1725kg
SUSPENSION (F)	struts, A-arms, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar	SUSPENSION (F)	multi-links, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bai
SUSPENSION (R)	multi-links, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar	SUSPENSION (R)	multi-links, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bai
L/W/H	4499/1808/1295mm	L/W/H	4750/1877/1400mm
WHEELBASE	2450mm	WHEELBASE	2840mm
TRACKS	1542/1519mm (f/r)	TRACKS	1636/1592mm
STEERING	electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion	STEERING	electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion
BRAKES (F)	350mm ventilated discs, 6-piston calipers	BRAKES (F)	390mm ventilated discs, 6-piston calipers
BRAKES (R)	330mm ventilated discs, 4-piston calipers	BRAKES (R)	380mm ventilated discs, 4-piston calipers
WHEELS	20.0 x 8.5-inch (f); 20 x 11.5-inch (r)	WHEELS	19.0 x 9.0-inch (f); 19 x 10.5-inch (r)
TYRE SIZES	245/35 ZR20 (f); 305/30 ZR20 (r)	TYRE SIZES	255/35 R19 (f); 285/30 R19 (r)
TYRE	Pirelli P-Zero	TYRE	Michelin Pilot Super Sports
RICE AS TESTED	\$258,750 (PDK)	PRICE AS TESTED	\$160,000 (est.)
PROS	Faster and more resolved than ever	PROS	Engine; handling; hooligan factor
	Some loss of character; extensive options		Rear styling iffy; quite weighty
STAR RATING	**************************************	STAR RATING	





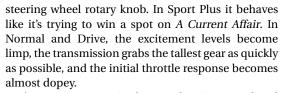
generic design, even if the only sheetmetal shared with the normal C-Class Coupe is the doors and roof. Everything else AMG has made to look meaner; all the flicks, splitters and diffusers will have boy racers in Nissan Silvias trying to race you at the lights. The changes run more than skin deep, too, with AMG thoroughly reworking the suspension, quickening the steering and, of course, installing an engine more than fit for autobahn blasting.

Much like the 911 GTS, the new Carrera S impresses with its polish. But it's a different car now, no less capable yet more relaxed, progressive and fluent. It's incredibly well tied down, yet expressive, precise and sublimely balanced, and it includes you in the process of cornering in a way many other so-called sportscars could only dream. Turn-in ability can be truly arresting, stability beyond 200km/h now no longer likely to bring on cardiac arrest, and the extracost carbon-ceramic brakes are breathlessly good.

Gripes? On rough roads the 911's ride often deteriorates from ho-hum to unsettling, while expensive extras like rear-wheel steering or switchable anti-roll bars are as dispensable as the minimum-tolerance sports suspension.

It's time to wrap up the day, but there's time for thought as the cars tick themselves cool. The C63's personality is split in that it's equally talented a

The new Carrera S impresses with its polish - it's a different car now, relaxed, progressive and fluent



It's not so extreme in the C63, but in Normal and Auto modes, unless challenged by a restless pedal operator, it'll still do its best Prius impersonation. Point is, more than ever these cars need their Sports buttons pressed to show any signs of libido. And the new turbo Carrera and C63 Coupe are two of the most extreme examples to date.

In their Manual modes, the PDK looks to win out on paper for performance, with its unbelievably quick and crisp shifts up and down. But it's closer in the real world. The Merc's Speedshift torque-converted tranny is marginally less efficient but slightly more emotional, able to slam up the gears with impressive rapidity, yet in cruise mode swaps cogs in a manner more relaxed than the Porsche.

On paper, too, the AMG GT might look the more suitable car for comparison with Porsche's new force-fed Carrera. But, the C63 is the more sorted, sharper and more chuckable back-road missile than its attention-grabbing big brother. It's the more sensible buy, too. That said, there's no denying there's only one hardcore sportscar in this comparison. The C63 is merely a sporty coupe; roomier and more practical, but to an extent compromised by the tall driving position, higher centre of gravity and more





Those with an engine fetish won't find much to get excited about with a 911; AMG 'hot-vee' V8 offers much more visual stimulation

stealth cruiser as attention-grabber in front of the right crowd. Despite its boisterous character and hotrod soundtrack, it'll bomb up a road with impressive talent and will be occasionally tricky to tame but always rewarding. It has got its act together over bumps to the point it's more confidence-inspiring than the Porsche. Then there's the practicality element the 911 can't match, with semi-useable rear seats and a decent boot. The C63 epitomises all the attractions (and flaws) of a rear-drive muscle coupe.

In contrast, the 911 is the more mature choice – a street-faring racecar fitted out to be comfortable, rather than a family car on 'roids. It could also be called the most homogenous 911 ever. Yes, it's a great car, but only in the context of its more focused siblings like the GT3 and GT3 RS, so far immune to such things as artificial aspiration and excessive driver assistance.

Both the 911 and C63 go like stink, thanks in no small part to some induction assistance, but that's about all they have in common. The new turbo Carrera S is the most sensible and accessible 911 we've driven for a long time, and the two-door C63 the most focused C-Class yet. If price and emotion top your list of criteria, go the blue car. If it's prestige, panache and perfection, go yellow.



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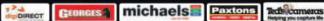


















Mazda's stunning RX-Vision Concept previews a rotary revival, but will it make production?





E'VE heard it all since the Mazda RX-8 made its debut in 2003. From rumours suggesting Mazda's rotary engine R&D is in full swing, to the company denying it'll ever build a Wankel engine or a rotary sportscar again.

Only 12 months ago, Mazda president and CEO Masamichi Kogai told US site *Automotive News*, "We don't have that kind of vehicle in our future product plan," when asked about a new RX-badged hero.

The Tokyo Motor Show RX-Vision concept, then, represents yet another backflip from the Hiroshima brand, and brings new hope Mazda will give us a reborn rotary sportscar to follow on from the RX-8, which was discontinued in 2012.

"One day rotary will make a comeback," said Kogai at the 2015 Tokyo Motor Show. "This gives form to

our brand's vision of the future. It expresses our intention to make rotary. There are many issues to overcome but we will continue our efforts. We're working steadily. Keep your eyes on Mazda."

We'll buzz the redline if a production version of the RX-Vision materialises. It'd be a far more fitting revival than the rotary's role as a range-extender generator, which was originally mooted for Audi's A1 E-Tron and a future hybrid Mazda 2 variant.

This, remember, is an engine with a high profile international motorsport legacy, headlined by Mazda's quad-rotor-powered 1991 Le Mans 24-hour victory with the 787B sports prototype. An engine that proved its giant-killing potential at the hands of Allan Moffat in Group C first-generation RX-7 form, in which he put the Mazda rotary firmly on the map by wrestling the 1983 Australian Touring Car Championship from the V8 establishment. The same engine that, with a twin-turbocharger in the Mazda Motorsport RX-7



SP, shaded Porsche to sweep the Bathurst and later Eastern Creek 12-hour events for production cars from 1992-1995.

A baby Wankel in an eco-car just wouldn't be right for a rotary revival. Even in a road-car context, there are few Aussies who haven't owned a hot rotary, or been treated to a rotary ride to remember. This disproportionately raucous little engine made a big impression in Oz over the course of four decades, and we'd love to have it back. Having been bitten once by the concept car hype, however, we'll keep our excitement in check until we see spy shots of a forthcoming Mazda sportscar.

Looking at the long, low, cab-rearward RX concept, what's clear is that it previews a focused sportscar, rather than a sporty RX-8 family-car replacement. The RX-8 was not all bad, but it wasn't exactly a sales success – and it was no RX-7.

An RX-7? We'd place bets on that being the badge worn by a new Mazda sportscar, just as Nissan has stuck with GT-R and Honda with NSX for their latest halo

products. There's decades of marketing and enthusiast sentiment wrapped up with these nameplates and, in the case of the RX-7, it's a model with a 24-year history (1978-2002).

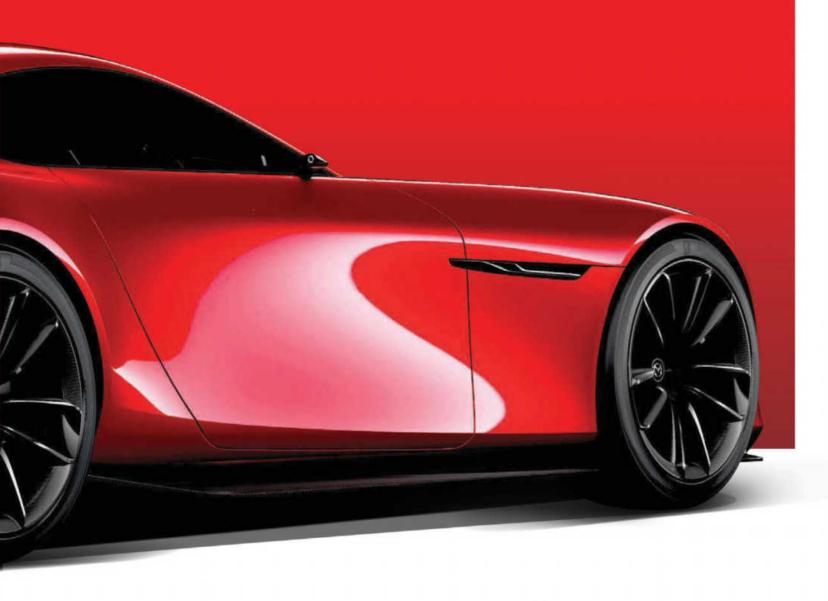
Mazda's 225kW '16X' engine surfaced in 2007 when it became the powerplant for the brand's Taiki concept car. The next iteration of the twin-rotor engine, now dubbed the SkyActiv-R, retains the 16X's 1.6-litre capacity, which is some 23 per cent bigger than that of the 1308cc Renesis used in the RX-8, the origins of which can be traced right back to 1972 when the 13B rotary first appeared in the Mazda Luce/RX-4 coupe and sedan.

The SkyActiv-R differs from almost every Mazda rotary produced in that its twin rotors sweep a larger epitrochoidal path to provide the capacity increase. All except the rare 13A engine utilised wider rotors and housings to deliver their extra capacity, including the 10A, 12A, 13B and triple-rotor 20B, in order from smallest to largest.





"One day rotary will make a comeback. There are many issues ... but we will continue our efforts."







Mazda's biggest challenge in bringing the rotary back is meeting today's ever-tightening fuel consumption and emissions regulations. For a nominally small capacity engine, the Wankel rotary has a lot of combustion chamber area through which heat is wasted, which means its thermodynamic efficiency - and therefore its fuel efficiency - is inherently low.

Last we heard on the grapevine, the rotary R&D department was struggling with both making the new 'long stroke' rotary rev and with oil sealing, which, historically, is not a new problem. Company president Kogai admits to the challenges: "Rotary engines have lots of issues, and we need to solve each of them."

Mazda's efforts to improve efficiency and emissions under the SkyActiv banner include adapting direct injection to the twin-rotor and readopting turbocharging as a means to deliver competitive fuel

economy and high torque in the low rev range.

It's possible that homogeneous charge compression ignition (HCCI) could feature in the new rotary, just as it will in Mazda's next-gen SkyActiv petrol piston engines. This could dictate that the aluminium end/ intermediate plates used in the 16X engine would revert to cast iron construction, as per earlier rotaries.

Thankfully, early suggestions that the twin-rotor will be augmented with an electric motor in a parallel hybrid system have been denied. The first and last RX-7s – not so much the second-gen – were renowned for their purity; the latter eschewing all-wheel-drive, and active four-wheel steering (big at the time) to deliver undiluted rear-wheel-drive involvement. And the next RX-7 looks set to be a pure sports coupe, though there are hints a semi-automatic or dualclutch gearbox could be part of the package.

Reintroducing the turbo is good news, because it means the fourth-generation RX-7 will be a hard-hitter, with masses of tuning potential. Even a conservative estimate would put power of the 1.6-litre turbo twinrotor at 275kW, which would be more than enough in a car that Mazda R&D chief Kiyoshi Fujiwara says would ideally be "lighter than a Cayman".

A turbo rotary doesn't need to spin as hard as a nonturbo, which is good for engine longevity and viability - remember, the RX-8 made peak power at 8200rpm, and the Renesis is not known for longevity.

The design concept suggests a two-seater and it draws obvious inspiration from some of Europe's best-known high-performance cars.

Few brands are in the position to deliver a relatively affordable, lightweight high-performance coupe with a V12-smooth, high-revving hand-built engine. In fact, we can't think of any. The car landscape would be richer for having another rotary-engined Mazda in it.

So, will Mazda put the RX-Vision into production and, if so, when will we see it? We'd certainly like to think so, and 2017 could make sense given that it marks 50 years since the Mazda rotary was born in the Cosmo Sport. What is certain is that if Mazda builds another RX-7, we'll be in a spin.







A

MERICA owes Australia. No, really, when you think about it, the US has a lot to thank its pals Down Under for. Whenever it goes to war we're there to help out, we ship our finest talent over – Cate Blanchett, Geoffrey Rush, Eric Bana, Hugh Jackman and more – to make its movies better and we're happy to lend a hand on the car front, too. The Monaro and latest VF Commodore made their way Stateside, as did the Caprice, which saved US police officers from enduring any more

motoring misery from behind the wheel of ancient Ford Crown Victorias.

So without putting too fine a point on it, it's time we got something in return – and no, *X Factor* judges don't count. Fortunately, Chrysler has come to the rescue with the new 300 SRT. Available only in Australia and the Middle East, Chrysler has somehow managed to make a business case for a model that's only shifted around 4000 units in the last decade. But we're glad it has, because when it comes to V8 rear-drive muscle cars, there's no such thing as too much choice.

It's not the only gift we can enjoy from Uncle Sam, however. As you're probably aware by now, as part of its MY16 Gen-F2 update, HSV has installed the 6.2-litre supercharged LSA V8, originally found in the Camaro ZL-1 and Cadillac CTS-V models Stateside, under the bonnet of its Clubsport, Maloo and Senator models. This means that, depending on your taste, you can sample 400kW/671Nm of blown V8 in sedan, ute or wagon flavours. Having driven the sedan last month and the Maloo on page 42, we chose the wagon for this comparison because, well, we wanted to; since when is an excuse needed to drive a 400kW station wagon?

Sadly, Chrysler no longer offers a wagon option for its 300 SRT. Buyers wanting Hemi-powered practicality can always stump up \$84,000 for a Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT, however unless you really need the extra load space the Chrysler is the car to have, not least because you can enjoy the same 6.4-litre V8 for just \$59,000. Packing 350kW/637Nm, the 300 SRT Core offers maximum kilowatts for your coin, however, if anything, our \$69,000 300 SRT test car only strengthens the value equation.

Okay, so the interior doesn't set any new benchmarks in material quality or fit and finish, but the amount of equipment contained within is just staggering. Here is just a selection: heated and cooled front seats; heated rear seats; leather and alcantara upholstery; 19-speaker Harmon Kardon stereo;

More than 750kW makes every wet drive in this pair an adventure, though the HSV has more traction than you'd expect







The numbers

Not much between these two

CHRYSLER 3	300 SRT	HSV CLUBSF	PORTTOURER
0-10km/h	0.29	0-10km/h	0.30
0-20km/h	0.67	0-20km/h	0.65
0-30km/h	1.01	0-30km/h	0.96
0-40km/h	1.40	0-40km/h	1.35
0-50km/h	1.82	0-50km/h	1.74
0-60km/h	2.24	 0-60km/h	2.18
0-70km/h	2.72	0-70km/h	2.69
0-80km/h	3.27	0-80km/h	3.23
0-90km/h	3.82	0-90km/h	3.88
0-100km/h	4.49	0-100km/h	4.54
0-110km/h	5.20	0-110km/h	5.32
0-120km/h	5.94	0-120km/h	6.11
0-130km/h	6.69	0-130km/h	6.96
0-140km/h	7.66	0-140km/h	7.86
0-150km/h	8.65	0-150km/h	8.83
0-160km/h	9.69	0-160km/h	9.94
0-170km/h	11.08	0-170km/h	11.23
0-180km/h	12.50	0-180km/h	12.57

0-400m

12.60sec @ 180.54km/h

80-120km/h (Drive) 2.8sec

100-0km/h 36.02m

SPEED IN GEARS

1st 61km/h @ 6500rpm 2nd 92km/h @ 6500rpm 3rd 137km/h @ 6500rpm

4th 173km/h @ 6500rpm 225km/h @ 6500rpm 6th 282km/h @ 6350rpm*

7th 282km/h @ 5320rpm* 8th 282km/h @ 4230rpm*

0-400m

12.67sec @ 180.75km/h 80-120km/h (Drive)

100-0km/h 33.89m

SPEED IN GEARS

64km/h @ 6300rpm

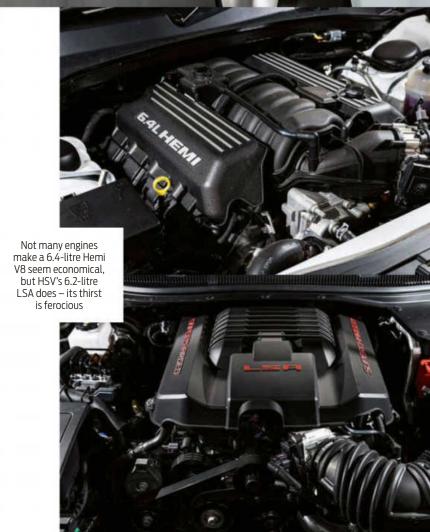
109km/h @ 6300rpm 168km/h @ 6300rpm

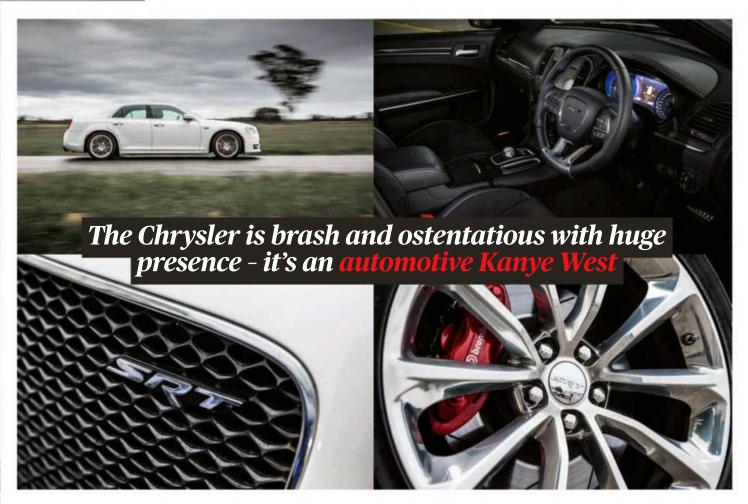
224km/h @ 6300rpm 250km/h @ 5200rpm* 250km/h @ 4100rpm*

N/A

N/A

* Manufacturer's claim As tested by *MOTOR*: Heathcote Dragway, 10:15am, 27 degrees, dry, driver Scott Newman





bi-Xenon headlights with adaptive cornering and auto high-beam functions; SRT Performance Pages with lap and acceleration timer; and a full suite of active safety gear, including blind-spot monitoring, adaptive cruise control, forward collision warning and lane departure warning.

In fact, the combination of adaptive cruise control, which will bring the car to a complete halt and then resume with traffic without driver intervention, and lane keep assist, which subtly steers the car back to the centre of your lane should you drift over the white line, means the 300 SRT offers semi-autonomous driving.

The HSV can't pull the same trick but offers similar levels of active safety tech, though most keen drivers will turn the systems off, their over-zealousness – emergency brake is particularly keen to activate for no reason – an irritation if you are actually paying attention. While the Clubsport's interior lacks the toys (heated and cooled seats) and tinsel (carbonfibre trim) of the Chrysler, it counters with a better driving position and head-up display, though it would be worth playing with trim colours to break up the overwhelming greyness of our test car.

The Clubsport LSA range starts at \$80,990 for a manual sedan, however the auto-only Tourer will set you back \$85,990, making the 300 SRT look somewhat of a bargain. Then again, judged against its \$10K pricier GTS sibling, this supercharged station wagon makes a strong case for itself, in a straight line at least. It may be 30kW/69Nm down and weigh a portly 1974kg – a 67kg penalty over the

Chrysler's huge size and flashy chrome means it attracts plenty of attention, though not always for the right reasons

Clubsport LSA sedan and 71kg more than the GTS – but the R8 LSA Tourer hits 100km/h in 4.54sec on its way to a 12.67sec quarter mile at 180.75km/h.

When it comes to bang for your buck, however, the Chrysler is king. At 1965kg it, too, is a heavy beast, yet it scorches to 100km/h in just 4.49sec and through 400m in 12.60sec at 180.54km/h, though if you believe the onboard computer it takes just 4.3sec and 12.3sec respectively, which illustrates the difference between DriftBox and drag strip timing. In pure performance terms you won't find two more closely matched cars, but the way they deliver speed is very different. The long overdue installation of an eight-speed auto has transformed the Chrysler. The 'box itself is nothing special, particularly on downshifts, but the extra ratios make the engine feel so much more urgent, the giant Hemi eating up gear after gear with a vicious snarl.

In contrast, the Clubsport feels almost lazy in comparison, though lazy is the wrong adjective for a car that can accelerate so effortlessly and rapidly. The speed in each gear inexorably builds (and builds, and builds), the exhaust note hardening from a guttural growl – the kind you get from an angry dog warning you to not step any closer – to an enraged roar in the process. The Clubby has a slightly hot-rod feel to it now, yet it is still extremely well-resolved – if anything, there's the impression that it could easily handle even more power.

Traction is strong, even in the wet. In the dry it takes a fairly concerted effort to break the rear free, and when it does so it's progressive and easily caught



with a flick of opposite lock. You could quite easily drive it without fear sans any electronic aids, though the Performance setting in the Driver Preference Dial is so good you might as well leave the safety net in place. The steering is weighty, perhaps slightly excessively so, and if we're nit-picking it could be a bit quicker off-centre, but you can still place what is a very large car very accurately.

It feels to sit quite flat in corners; the LSA models' stiffer spring and damper rates have largely eradicated the Commodore Redline's off-throttle playfulness, but perhaps that's no bad thing given the Tourer weighs well over two tonnes with a driver and a full tank of fuel on board. The Chrysler is equally bulky, and despite impressive hardware – both cars sport large discs and four-piston calipers front and rear – the brakes of each do feel the strain under continued heavy use.

In terms of cornering behaviour, the 300 SRT feels remarkably similar to its antipodean rival. Both cars are essentially neutral, with mid-corner understeer if you carry too much speed on entry and oversteer on exit if you use too much throttle. The Chrysler's ultimate limits are lower thanks to 245/45 R20 Goodyear Eagle F1 rubber all 'round versus the HSV's 255/35 R20 (front) and 275/35 R20 (rear) Continentals, though the flip side of that is the harder Goodyears will cop more punishment than the sticky but soft Contis.

That said, it's remarkable how good the big 300 is

Two excellent US imports: Australia is one of just two markets to offer the new 300 SRT, and HSV's LSA engine started life in Camaro ZL-1 and Cadillac CTS-V models

to drive hard. Looking at it you'd assume it's going to handle with all the poise and finesse of a Melbourne tram, but while it's never going to qualify for *Swan Lake*, it's very capable and very friendly at the limit. Initially it feels a bit woolly, but delve into the SRT drive mode page and things improve markedly. With its three-stage adaptive dampers set to 'Street' the Chrysler is soft and wallowy, however Sport tightens up the body control without a huge deterioration in secondary ride quality (small, sharp impacts).

Likewise, the new electrically-assisted power steering is light and vague in Street, but Sport offers enough weight to lean against – if little in the way of actual feel. Track suspension and steering is probably a step too far for most people on the road, but the Track ESP setting is brilliant. Lenient yet subtle in its interventions, if you need more slip angle than this on the street you're going to end up on *A Current Affair*, though few cars are easier to drive extremely sideways if you have the venue and inclination to do so.

What ultimately costs the Chrysler, however, is its lack of composure at the limit. Up to around seven or eight-tenths it's all pretty happy, but push harder and you start to wish for a bit more control and feedback. Some issues are ergonomic; you sit high in the driver's seat, the paddle shifters are awkwardly placed and the throttle action is incredibly long. But the main problem is that the 300 SRT always feels like an extremely big car, never shrinking around





HSV CLUBSPORT R8 LSA TOURER

BODY	5-door, 5-seat wagon		
DRIVE	rear-wheel		
ENGINE	6162cc V8, OHV, 16v, supercharger		
BORE/STROKE	103.25 x 92.0mm		
COMPRESSION	9.0:1		
POWER	400kW @ 6150rpm		
TORQUE	671Nm @ 4200rpm		
POWER/WEIGHT	203kW/tonne		
TRANSMISSION	6-speed automatic		
WEIGHT	1974kg		
SUSPENSION (F)	struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar		
SUSPENSION(R)	multi-links, coil springs, anti-roll bar		
L/W/H	4978/1899/1454mm		
WHEELBASE	2915mm		
TRACKS	1616/1590mm (f/r)		
STEERING	electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion		
BRAKES (F)	367mm ventilated discs, 4-piston calipers		
BRAKES (R)	372mm solid discs, 4-piston calipers		
WHEELS	20.0 x 8.5-inch (f); 20.0 x 9.5-inch (r)		
TYRE SIZES	255/35 ZR20 (f); 275/35 ZR20 (r)		
TYRE	Continental ContiSportContact5P		
PRICE AS TESTED	\$85,990		
PROS	Supercharged grunt; polished dynamics		
CONS	Weight; firm ride; outrageous thirst		

you in the same manner as the Clubsport.

STAR RATING ***

But it does have other virtues. Any discussion of styling is always largely down to personal taste, but the Chrysler has a massive amount of presence. It's brash and ostentatious – an automotive Kanye West – and, like the controversial rapper, guaranteed to cause a stir wherever you go. Just beware that the responses will range from adulation to revulsion.

On the other hand, it doesn't get much more sensible than a Commodore wagon, though few will mistake the Clubsport R8 LSA Tourer for your run-of-the-mill Holden, especially once it starts up with a thunderous boom. We reckon it looks awesome, understated yet aggressive, especially in HSV's new Slipstream blue. And the new tail-lights, bonnet vents and sculpted side skirts freshen up its styling. Between this, AMG's C63 S Estate and CLA45

CHRYSLER 300 SRT

BODY	4-door, 5-seat sedan			
DRIVE	rear-wheel			
ENGINE	6417c V8, OHV, 16v			
BORE/STROKE	103.9 x 94.5mm			
COMPRESSION	10.9:1			
POWER	350kW @ 6150rpm			
TORQUE	637Nm @ 4250rpm			
POWER/WEIGHT	178kW/tonne			
TRANSMISSION	8-speed automatic			
WEIGHT	1965kg			
SUSPENSION (F)	double A-arms, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar			
SUSPENSION(R)	multi-links, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar			
L/W/H	5089/1902/1478mm			
WHEELBASE	3052mm			
TRACKS	1621/1639mm (f/r)			
STEERING	electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion			
BRAKES (F)	360mm ventilated discs, 4-piston calipers			
BRAKES (R)	350mm ventilated discs, 4-piston calipers			
WHEELS	20.0 x 9.0-inch (f/r)			
TYRE SIZES	245/45 ZR20 (f/r)			
TYRE	Goodyear Eagle F1			
PRICE AS TESTED	\$69,000			
PROS	Searing pace; value; looks; ride comfort			
CONS	Steering better but not great; gearbox could be sharper			
STAR RATING	****			

STARRATING ***





Battle of the badges: both are keen to boast of the brute force lurking beneath their bonnets

Shooting Brake, Audi's RS6 and VW's Golf R Wagon, we're in a golden age of practical performance cars, which makes you wonder why anyone would want to buy an SUV. No sportified off-roader drives as well as the Clubsport, and it's this dynamic prowess that gives the HSV the win here.

But only by the slimmest of margins. The Chrysler is a surprise packet – it feels a bit like a cut-price E63 AMG, and that's a good thing. It's not the sharpest tool in the dynamic shed, but it sounds awesome, goes hard, is loaded with kit and is a whopping \$17,000 cheaper than the HSV. Not everyone is going to be a fan of the bling, but for those who are – people who wish their lives were more like *The Sopranos*, presumably – it's a fine alternative to the traditional muscle car choices. We're not square yet, America, but this is a good start.



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McLaren's new 570S will have you worried you'll run out of mental disc space. It's a baby 650S in price and spec, if not size, and while the older sibling throws around more performance muscle by way of 59 extra kilowatts, a more sophisticated chassis and active aero – adding up to a sharper driving experience – the younger brother may be the better entertainer. After two days in one, and several hours of hard driving in the back hills of Portugal, our grin was yet to subside by breakfast, day three.

McLaren says it's released the 570S into the same jungle as Audi's R8 V10, Aston's V12 Vantage and the Porsche 911 Turbo S. On paper, this might seem to be the case, but on the road, the Aston would lose touch at the end of the very first long straight, the R8 would feel less playful and the 911, while super-sensible and super-competent, would be eerily cold-blooded and quite the introvert compared to the 570S.

It looks like a blueprint of the 650S, but in fact it's 110mm longer and looks more restrained from certain angles. The main difference is revealed at a lift of a heron-wing door, for McLaren has tried hard to make its 570S as friendly as possible for daily use. To make it easier to get in and out of, the forward section of the sill has been narrowed and shortened by 80mm.

feedback is super impressive, but in the wet the grip is delicate; roundabouts get your heart rate up time (front!) after time (rear!). Meanwhile the carbon ceramic brakes are wooden when cold, the engine note loud but one-dimensional, and the ride ho-hum on the brittle suspension and extra-stiff sidewall tyres. A lack of separate damper adjustment doesn't help. At least the 570S shows off a nearly flat cornering stance when the speed starts to ramp up.

As you might've guessed, "570S" is a nod to the 570 horses under the engine lid (which, for the record, customers can't open). There's 419kW at 7400rpm and from there to the limiter, there is still 1100rpm to play with. Maximum torque, a feisty 600Nm, is available between 5000 and 6000rpm. It all adds up to 0-100km/h in 3.2sec, 0-200km/h in 9.5sec and a 330km/h top speed – virtually on par with an R8 and Turbo S. Even the 488 is only a couple of tenths quicker off the mark and a token 8km/h faster. Father Ron will tell you the 570S uses 10.7L/100km, but it doubles to more like 22.0L/100km with Uncle Georg at the helm.

A stab at the launch control button turns every set of traffic lights into an opportunity to lay elevens. First gear is so short it requires a well-prepared index finger or you'll snag the limiter. Second can cause mild whiplash. Third is where the 570S jettisons solid rocket boosters and hits warp drive.

It's bordering on irrelevant in the real world, not least Australia, but it's the 200-300km/h bracket where the 570S truly comes into its own. Seventh is not merely a cruising gear anymore, and fifth transfers all that grunt almost seamlessly to sixth.

McLaren launched the 570S in a dozy corner of Portugal, where laid-back farmers on tractors and pensioners full of booze are bigger dangers than Constable Plod in an underpowered Seat. And along

It's the 200-300km/h bracket where the 570S truly comes into its own

The new seats offer more support and a slightly more generous range of adjustment (but beware, the top-of-the-line carbonfibre jobbies aren't cheap).

For the first time there's a lit vanity mirror, a proper glovebox and respectable storage space. You even get two windscreen wipers instead of one. McLaren is still playing catch-up in other areas, though. There's no adaptive cruise control or head-up display, and while there's start-stop, McLaren doesn't yet do the kind of off-throttle coasting you might find in something from Stuttgart.

Day one's weather makes us feel like we should be building an ark instead of testing a supercar, but the 570S wastes no time clocking up the brownie points. Despite the focused Pirelli P-Zero Corsa tyres, wet traction is strong, the 570S showing off mighty midrange turbo punch, a willingness to rev and bullet-fast upshifts with the drivetrain set to Race. Steering







Up close: McLaren's new baby

The nitty gritty of Woking's new sports car

ONCPOWER GAMES

Dry-sumped 3.8litre twin-turbo V8 common to 650S, though 30 per cent of parts are bespoke to 570S. Seven-speed dual-clutch gearbox can use the inertia of the flywheel to fill in the torque gap during gearshifts resulting in uninterrupted acceleration at high rpm – clever stuff.

two

570S is the first McLaren not to use the clever ProActive Chassis Control, which uses hydraulically connected dampers. McLaren has instead developed a traditional mechanical suspension system with adaptive dampers.

three HOT STUFF

Aluminium body panels are created through a process called 'Superforming', in which hot aluminium is blown into shape over a mould. Complex shapes are possible and McLaren claims the resultant panels are as light as composite equivalents.

four

As with all McLarens, 570S is based around a carbon fibre 'Monocell' which weighs just 75kg, helping to acheive a dry weight of just 1313kg. McLaren claims this is the lightest in its class, however it's very adamant the 570S is a sports car rather than a supercar.

five OLD SCHOOL

Steering remains electro-hydraulically assisted, McLaren claiming that the levels of feel that result cannot be replicated by a fully electric system, and based on the evidence of the 570S we'd have to agree. Front tyres are a mere 225mm wide, while rears are 285mm.



Interior improves with every new model McLaren makes; infotainment system now works well and material quality and fit and finish are excellent Portugal's eucalyptus-lined back roads (some of which feel uncannily like Australia) the 570S reels in and spits out road like a tarmac-processing machine, with catapult-like briskness, an addictive appetite for corners and an overtaking punch that has to be felt to be believed.

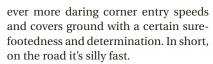
Unlike a 911, which fights every corner and won't fully relax even on straights, the British bullet rarely feels to leave its comfort zone. Despite a few character traits that could be considered rhythm-interrupting (ie, the braking distances compress as the hardware heats up) the 570S is all about riding the flow. It's

also intolerant to careless driver inputs and ill-timed gear shifts, but get on the same wavelength and the 1406kg twoseater is incredibly good at maintaining and mastering momentum. It invites kind of features that make for a keeper, including softtouch doors, front-vehicle lift and reversing camera.

All that is quickly forgotten, however, at a glance of the green light at the end of Portimao pit lane. Our black-over-green track chariot comes with AUD\$95,000 worth of options including swathes of carbonfibre, thinly-padded buckets, an almost vulgar sports exhaust, racing harnesses and stealth-look wheels wearing Pirelli P-Zero Corsas. But it looks angry.

Before leaving pit lane we briefly familiarise ourselves with the half dozen knobs and buttons which tweak the car's character from behaved to beast in three steps: Normal, Sport and Race. Handling (suspension, dampers, ESP) and engine (transmission, throttle) have separate controls, so you can combine an angry drivetrain with a supple chassis if you so wish. Separately, the ESP comes in

The 570S reels in and spits out road like a tarmac-processing machine



Yet when you've had enough, the 570S is only too eager to prove its mettle as marriage material, with a decent stereo, plush interior materials and the

On, Dynamic or Off.

Manual gearshift mode comes with a single-piece, see-sawing shift paddle arrangement. It's a neat little detail, but in a sporty road car we still prefer the unambiguous fixed Ferrari paddles with "Up" and "Down". Same applies to the one-knob-does-it-all manettino, which is much more accessible than the McLaren equivalent, hidden in the undergrowth of





The nicely balanced weight distribution makes the 570S hugely chuckable

the centre console.

All modes set to Race and with the ESP in Dynamic, we blast out on to the Portimao track. This is no boring, Mickey Mouse circuit; it's a challenging drive, fast and full of undulation, dotted with crests, dips and blind corners. At the end of the downhill start-finish straight the digital speedo reads 255km/h – 15km/h more than the R8 V10 Plus we drove here three months ago.

The payback for nursing the tyres through the second-gear kinks is just about enough grip for the third- and fourth-gear sweepers where we ballet dance on the edge of grip, lap after lap. The brakes gain bite as the session wears on, blending massive stopping power with easy modularity and just the right amount of pedal effort. Again, it's the mind-scrambling urge above 200km/h which particularly focuses attention. There's no all-wheel drive but the nicely balanced weight distribution (42:58) makes the 570S hugely chuckable, transparent and responsive.

Our black-and-green beauty is only too willing to demonstrate its rowdiness and throw around its rather large ego as we move closer and closer to where the grip runs out. It's only now that the chewing-gum tyres let out the first little squeals and the gearshifts become brutal to the point of sending a shudder through the carbonfibre chassis.

Getting ever more cocky with the turn-in manoeuvres, it's only now that we begin to fondly remember the active yaw and roll control fitted to the 650S, or the self-adjusting and stability-enhancing aerodynamics. Over crests taken at ten-tenths, the front end of the 570S becomes momentarily light; in this super-aggressive zone, brake dive is more pronounced as well, and the somewhat squirmish attitude through very fast corners is not particularly confidence-inspiring.

But if nothing else, the 570S is certainly emotional. Sliding ever-so-smoothly in an arc – fourth-gear, no less – is grand cinema for the brain. Up there, in the secret projection room of the mind, you can't help but constantly hit the repeat button late into the night.

MCLAREN 570S

BODY	2-door, 2-seat coupe			
DRIVE	rear-wheel			
ENGINE	3799cc V8, DOHC, 32v, twin-turbo			
BORE/STROKE	93.0 x 69.9mm			
COMPRESSION	8.7:1			
POWER	419kW @ 7400rpm			
TORQUE	600Nm @ 5000-6000rpm			
POWER/WEIGHT	298kW/tonne			
TRANSMISSION	7-speed dual-clutch auto			
WEIGHT	1406kg			
SUSPENSION (F)	double A-arms, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar			
SUSPENSION(R)	double A-arms, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar			
L/W/H	4530/2095/1202mm			
WHEELBASE	2670mm			
TRACKS	N/A			
STEERING	Electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion			
BRAKES (F)	394mm ventilated/drilled discs; 6-piston calipers			
BRAKES (R)	380mm ventilated/drilled discs; 4-piston calipers			
WHEELS	19.0 x 8.0-inch (f); 20 x 10.0-inch (r)			
TYRE SIZES	225/35 R19 (f); 285/35 R20 (r)			
TYRES	Pirelli P-Zero Corsa			
PROS	Class-leading pace; most engaging McLaren yet			
CONS	Firm ride; steep options pricing			
PRICE	\$408,000			
RATING	****			





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by DANIEL DEGASPERI pics THOMAS WIELECKI

Fitter and faster than ever, can the latest MINI John Cooper Works stack up to the legend after which it's named?

A

LEC ISSIGONIS wouldn't have approved of today's frivolities. The original Mini designer/engineer obsessed over designing a British people's car. He moved the wheels to each corner, utilised then-unpopular front-wheel drive and

laid the engine an unheard-of east-west, stuffing the gearbox and diff inside the sump to provide sedan-beating interior space within a 3.05-metre length.

His engineering background also meant creating independent suspension in the name of roadholding that was unflippable for mothers going to the market.

It took racing friend John Cooper to nudge him on the arm and tell him he'd inadvertently created a sporty car, but pragmatist Issigonis laughed. So JC built one and took it to BMC management, who signed off on the Cooper S project.

Fifty years ago, in September 1965, a Cooper S rolled off the Aussie production line just south of the Sydney CBD, the first of around 35,000 versions produced that year, and next year it'll be a half-century since the Cooper S won its first and only Bathurst race.

The arrival of today's new John Cooper Works and its title as the fastest MINI ever makes it a timely entrant in the fifth annual Rylstone Classic – a 'pretend rally' celebration between 60 original Mini owners.

Pretend rally? We're told that this 500km-long punt across some of New South Wales' best driving roads will be no mothers-to-market meander.

The startline is on the northern outskirts of Sydney, where the Pie in the Sky eatery's car park is packed with cars and contenders, including a couple wearing free-love colour tees. It feels like the swinging 60s.

Our MINI appears bulbous compared with the cute and petite original; any packaging innovation has (ironically) given way to fashion that would have Issigonis choking on his gin. It's 3.87m-long but with a tiny boot, cramped rear room and a \$49,950 price tag.

There are some lovely original Minis here, though, that all smell of innocence. Little details, such as wire mesh over the headlights and extruded door latches, define class. But even discussing image is hardly the point of today – more importantly, would John Cooper be proud of the new MINI that bears his name?

Only kilometres after the start-line, any sign of the original's cuteness evaporates. Tracing the uphill start of Putty Road – a 174km stretch of twisty tarmac – a sweet pale-blue Cooper S is working hard to point its little nose towards the matching blue sky.

As the blacktop crests then unrolls like a wide tarmac cable, the slithering corners ahead become a spectacle, like watching Nanna's old bathtub bobbing like a sled on a downhill course. The tiny 10.0-inch tyres squirm on the oil-filled Hydrolastic suspension, yet its cornering stance remains tidy.

The two-mode adjustable dampers of our JCW may not be innovative, but that grumpy old-people's-car engineer would be blown away by the results. Both previous JCW variants – the 150kW supercharged tuning kit of 2002 and 155kW turbocharged factory model of 2008 – hated bumps as much as they loved torque-steer and stand-on-nose cornering. This new one, on 205mm-wide 18s, breathes with the road surface, particularly in its regular mode.

A glance in the JCW's electro-chromatic rear-view mirror suddenly reveals a matte-black Mini following behind. It makes me feel eerily uncomfortable, the yellow-glow halogen headlights appearing slightly evil, as though it is a giant-killer from *Mad Max*. An overtaking lane emerges and behind 'Darth Mini' suddenly splays a Skittles-coloured Mini-posse on the chase.

We drop windows and the angry blurt of 1275 furious cubic centimetres screams past backed by a flurry of pops and crackles. Our MINI's left paddle gets slapped twice as the accelerator is flattened but there is only a distant baritone boom.



"Yeah," photographer Wielecki pauses, poker faced. "Darth sounds better."

Evil's rear window reads "classic not plastic", which makes me to want to reach out and cover the JCW's goggle eyes to protect its feelings, particularly after our snapper's stab.

A stats comparison is interesting: the 1275 S left the Sydney factory with 57kW and 107Nm pushing the 676kg brick to 100km/h in 10.8 seconds.

Our Cooper JCW has two extra gears (six-speed auto, sadly no manual is available yet) with not quite double the capacity (2.0-litre) producing, thanks to a turbocharger, almost exactly three times the outputs – 170kW and 320Nm. With nearly double the mass to shift (1220kg), however, the new car's 6.1-second 0-100km/h sprint isn't half as fast as the original.

Meanwhile the overtaking lane ends as a long straight appears. Ahead we see the pale-blue Mini settling begrudgingly at the speed limit behind a gathering of sports bikes. Or at least that's our assumption until a whiff of smoke signals an imminent overtake on a road surface that looks like a picnic rug thrown over unmown grass. Bouncing and bobbing away, pale-blue is gone after a few kilometres.

At a lunch stop owners tinker under bonnets while conveying a genuine interest in the newbie – most love it but baulk at its price and size. Naturally, we shake the hand of pale-blue Mini mate and naively ask if he's running a standard 1275 S.

"Well... kinda," he starts. "The engine's bored and stroked to about 1330cc and I've shortened the throttle body for better low-end torque and..."

The talking soon turns to fuel stops, with some Minis having a single 20-litre tank positioned on the left side of the boot. Twin-tank models – standard on Cooper S – encroach boot space by having another 20 litres on the right, and can be identified by a second

fuel cap on that side's rear haunch.

While pies are being downed, we get a head start with father-and-son duo Frank and Luke Hines kindly giving us a drive in their restored 1966 Cooper S.

The cabin is simple, defined by a Cooper-embossed gearknob, a chubby three-spoke steering wheel and tiny tachometer. Upright A-pillars and vast glass give the impression you're sitting in something larger than a brick, and the 1275 S feels supercar-low to the ground by today's standards.

The JCW's driving position and broad dash feel comparatively SUV-like. In our new model a plastic rocker switch on the lower dash acts as the engine start button; in the old S you switch the fuel pump on by flicking an actual metal rocker switch before

Within two metres, the original 1275 S feels twice as frenetic as the latest JCW

twisting the key.

Within two metres the 1275 S feels twice as frenetic as the JCW. Steering systems are often tagged as sharp, but this description would downplay how wonderfully electric the original's rack-and-pinion system is. Move millimetres off centre and it seems to confuse your desire for turning into a mere bend with wanting to punt into a switchback.

Accelerating sounds as though your ear is attached to the throttle-body – it sits just behind the speedo – so 5000rpm feels like 7000rpm, and in Frank's car the straight-cut four-speed manual mimms and ehhhs loudly with each upchange.

Riding on liquid-filled dampers, the suspension







Minis en masse Doing a bit of car spotting

A BIG thanks to ausmini.com and organiser Evan Redman for allowing MOTOR to bring the newbie along on the well-organised drive. Closing the generation gap just like Frank and Luke, he steered a Cooper S alongside his old man.

The oldest car of the field was a non-S 1963 Mini Cooper. The newest (besides our JCW) was a single 2005 Mini Cooper S in all its supercharged goodness it was cheekily tagged as a BMW on the run sheet.

In between was a 1981 Leyland Moke complete with eyelashes; the 1972 Leyland Mini Clubman GT that replaced the 1275 S; and an imported 1998 Rover Mini Cooper that saw out the original shape after 41 years.

Biggest Mini fans had to be Peter and Karen Morris, who have 42 Minis in Victoria but chose to drive only one to Sydney. It broke down halfway and forced them to overnight it in the Mini's pews. They made it, however, and completed the rally. That's the spirit!



John Cooper's son, Michael, established John Cooper Works back in 2000

BODY	3-door,	4-seat	hatch
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DRIVE front-wheel

ENGINE 1998cc inline-4, DOHC, 16v, turbocharger

BORE/STROKE 82.0 x 94.6mm

COMPRESSION 10.2:1

POWER 170kW @ 5200-6000rpm

TORQUE 320Nm @ 1250-4800rpm
POWER/WEIGHT 139kW/tonne

TRANSMISSION 6-speed auto WEIGHT 1220kg

SUSPENSION (F) struts, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar

SUSPENSION (R) multi-links, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar L/W/H 3874/1727/1414mm

WHEELBASE 2495mm

TRACKS 1485mm (f/r)

STEERING electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion

BRAKES (F) 330mm ventilated discs, 4-piston calipers

BRAKES (R) TBC

WHEELS 18.0 x 7.0-inch (f/r)

TYRE SIZES 205/40 R18 (f/r)

TYRE Pirelli Cinturato P7 (f/r)

PRICE AS TESTED \$49,950 (auto) PROS Lotsa grunt; new-found civility; looks

CONS Softer than predecessors; price STAR RATING ***

feels squidgy, but in a good way. It kinda just digs in and goes, moving around you subtly like a builder settling a brick into place over freshly poured concrete.

Meanwhile the unassisted brakes require the firmest of presses, yet the throttle is high enough to force ballet-style en pointe footwork when attempting to rev-match – it's stand on middle pedal with toe, just reach right one with back of heel. Unfortunately you're left looking more like a dad dancer at the local RSL, the completely flat seat slamming you against the door in corners while you desperately cling to the hyper-active tiller for support.

Similarities between the two Mini Cooper models are apparent, particularly on corner exit. Each keep



Compared with the lairy behaviour of 60s muscle cars, it's easy to see why this early hot hatch was celebrated

their bodies flat at the front end, working those wheels hard before allowing a surprisingly early squeeze of the throttle. There's gentle understeer, but ultimately a fast and neat exit. Compared with the lairy behaviour of 60s muscle cars, it's easy to see why this earliest iteration of hot-hatch was celebrated.

At the northern tip of Putty, we switch back on Bylong Valley Way that forks over the other side of the Blue Mountains and threads to the Rylstone finish line, not far from Bathurst. With dusk photography required, we wave goodbye to Frank and Luke.

This is a proper touring road that commands liberal 'pretend' rally speed, and it's on a tight hillclimb where the JCW pulls its ace card. With quality Pirelli rubber working with Sport suspension, and close ratios keeping you between the 1250-4850rpm peak torque and 5200rpm max-power zones, the JCW lifts off like the rocket-ship graphic displayed on the colour screen when its raciest mode is selected.

Despite that fun this latest MINI's behaviour is utterly polished; JCW specials are typically more of a riot. The steering ultimately lacks the immediacy of its predecessor, let alone the electricity of the 1275 S, and the chassis is so balanced it stays planted even following a mid-corner brake brush. As a racing driver, John Cooper would probably adore it and punch me in the face – their kind loved grip and go.

Even then, perhaps MINI isn't trying when it comes to 'go', because the same 2.0-litre in a BMW 330i makes another 50Nm (and Audi's S1 produces 370Nm). If there's a message from today, it's that extracting everything out of a car reaps the greatest rewards. As likeable as it is, this JCW feels like it has more to give.

There's no champagne at the finish of this 'pretend' rally, just beer on tap at the local pub – this is the western plains, mate, not the south of France. As the amber flows and the entrants settle in for the night, we instead make a 250km dash homebound.

After 500km already, it's active cruise control on, head-up display pointing sat-nav directions and LED headlights blazing. Turbo torque swells as the auto relaxes in sixth, Wielecki snoozes in the broad passenger seat and I gently crank up the Harman Kardon stereo that – much like the car itself – is anything but mini.



THE BRAWL BMW X5 M v Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 ¥BMW-020 106 january 2016 motormag.com.au

by SCOTT NEWMAN pics CRISTIAN BRUNELLI

Monster Match

With over 850kW/1500Nm between them, you better think twice before taking on these two V8 brutes in your flash sports car





MAGINE, for a moment, if performance cars were athletes. A Lotus Elise, for example, would be AFL wizard Cyril Rioli, light with superb agility, while a Porsche 911 GT3 would be Usain Bolt, lithe and unbeatable on-track. An HSV GTS? Perhaps NBA phenom Lebron James, large and powerful but surprisingly athletic.

So where does this analogy leave the likes of the BMW X5 M and Mercedes-AMG GLE 63? Well, these hulking brutes are the automotive equivalent of Hafthór Júlíus Björnsson; the 206cm/190kg Icelandic giant who plays The Mountain in TV show *Game of Thrones*. This modern-day viking is one of the world's strongest men, but if there was ever a World's Strongest Car competition, the X5 M and GLE 63 would likely be facing off in the final.

They might have started life as humble city-dwelling off-roaders, but thanks to the attentions of the mad minions at M Division and AMG, this pair has emerged as snarling beasts, capable of swallowing sportscars whole – or at least, so their makers claim.

Certainly their sprinting ability is world class. The new BMW X5 M musters 423kW/750Nm from its 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8, an increase of 15kW/70Nm over its predecessor, sent to all four wheels through an eight-speed ZF torque-converter automatic. BMW claims this 2275kg monster can hit 100km/h in just

4.2sec – a claim it matches on the strip. Rudimentary launch control builds a few revs against the brakes, catapulting the Beemer off the line. There's so much grunt that a short-shift to second doesn't cost it any time and it hurtles over the quarter mile in a scarcely believable 12.38sec at 182.91km/h.

But the Mercedes is even faster, though given its 5.5-litre twin-turbo V8 now packs 430kW/760Nm in updated 'S' guise, perhaps that isn't so surprising. It requires some cute timing to build boost quickly against the brakes without bogging down off the line, but get it right and the GLE fires to 100km/h in 4.18sec, dispatching 400m in 12.30sec at 183.77km/h.

Under full acceleration the nose rises like a speedboat, the most ferocious noise bellowing out of its AMG-branded quad tailpipes. The soundtrack is straight out of 1960s Detroit, with a crack like snapping timber on full-throttle upshifts – you could easily buy a GLE 63 for the noise alone. It's not long for this world, the M157 engine, but years of development have made it smooth and supremely powerful – it's the heart and soul of the car.

Two such words that can't be applied to the BMW's engine. Undoubtedly effective, it may be every bit as potent as the AMG powerplant but it has none of the character. It's as if the engineers couldn't figure out what they wanted it to sound like, so they made it sound like everything. There are hints of diesel and highly tuned four-cylinder, a dollop of in-line six and very occasionally something that approaches a traditional V8. The thunderclaps from the exhaust on upshifts are a nice touch, though.



X5 M's cornering prowess is simply incredible for such a massive vehicle; would leave many more fancied cars behind





If there was ever a World's Strongest Car competition, the X5 M and GLE 63 would likely be facing off in the final





The transmission is similarly confused. M Division engineers have done a remarkable job in making the X5's eight-speed auto mimic the behaviour of the seven-speed dual-clutch 'box found in other M cars, but it's debatable whether there's been any benefit in doing so. The shifts are extremely quick, with only the occasional downshift refusal a giveaway it's a regular auto, but its low-speed behaviour isn't as smooth as it should be and the engineered-in thumps on full-throttle upshifts are uncomfortable and unnecessary, though some may enjoy the sense of theatre.

It is, however, leagues ahead of the Mercedes 'box. The seven-speed wet-clutch MCT auto feels a generation behind, though the latest C63 shows what it's capable of. It's smoother from rest than the BMW's, but low-speed stumbles aren't what you expect from a \$190K car, and it's slow to respond to shift requests via the paddles, if it responds at all. For day-to-day use it's best left to its own devices in Sport mode, but Sport+ is well calibrated to more spirited driving, holding gears to redline under acceleration and downshifting superaggressively under brakes.

The resultant engine braking is an asset, as despite a double-wishbone front-end and multi-link rear the GLE 63 is no natural handler. You sit high in the driver's seat and the centre of gravity feels higher still. Combine this with relatively soft suspension and the big Merc sways during hard cornering like a skyscraper in a hurricane. It's no accident the ESP can't be completely deactivated, though it might prevent a few.

The electronics are quick to intervene if you overstep the threshold, but work within the parameters and the softness makes the GLE quite entertaining to drive. It takes little effort to rotate the car on the brakes in slower corners and you're always busy behind the wheel making inputs or corrections to keep everything pointed in roughly the right direction. Push too hard, though, and it'll start to misbehave. The steering, while well-weighted and linear, refuses to change under load, the brakes soften, and despite a 40:60 front/rear torque split, the inside-front wheel spins up on corner exit before the ESP dramatically kills momentum.

The GLE 63 essentially feels like a traditional four-wheel drive with a nuclear powerplant under the bonnet; that's not to say it handles like a Land Rover – it can carry impressive speed in faster bends – but it quickly becomes clear that the best way to drive it is to coax it through corners before unleashing the engine and demolishing the straight bits in between. It's not helped by wearing Michelin Latitude Sports tyres, which while enormous (295/35 ZR21 all 'round) offer nothing like the grip of the X5 M's Michelin Pilot Super Sports; the same tyres, incidentally, fitted to the M3 and Ferrari 488. Measuring 285/35 ZR21 up front and a

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X5 M doesn't look too much different to the regular X5, however more than 20 M badges are present to remind you what you're driving







BMW's 4.4-litre V8 does more with less, generating 96kW/ litre to the AMG's 78kW/litre...

...but it can't match the awesome noise of the Merc. M157 soon to be replaced by new 4.0-litre unit

The numbers

Defying the extra kilos

BMW X5 M	Mercedes-AMG GLE 63
0-10km/h 0.23	0-10km/h 0.25
0-20km/h 0.59	0-20km/h 0.62
0-30km/h 0.95	0-30km/h 0.97
0-40km/h 1.33	0-40km/h 1.30
0-50km/h 1.73	0-50km/h 1.64
0-60km/h 2.16	0-60km/h 2.08
0-70km/h 2.61	0-70km/h 2.52
0-80km/h 3.08	0-80km/h 2.97
0-90km/h 3.65	0-90km/h 3.57
0-100km/h 4.20	0-100km/h 4.18
0-110km/h 4.89	0-110km/h 4.81
0-120km/h 5.60	0-120km/h 5.49
0-130km/h 6.39	0-130km/h 6.35
0-140km/h 7.28	0-140km/h 7.29
0-150km/h 8.29	0-150km/h 8.25
0-160km/h 9.36	0-160km/h 9.25
0-170km/h 10.63	0-170km/h 10.38
0-180km/h 11.96	0-180km/h 11.65
0-190km/h 13.45	0-190km/h 13.30
0-400m	0-400m
12.38sec @ 182.91km/h	12.30sec @ 183.77km/h
80-120km/h	80-120km/h (3rd-6th)
2.5sec	2.5sec
100-0km/h 34.03m	100-0km/h 37.58m
SPEED IN GEARS	SPEED IN GEARS
60km/h @ 6900rpm	59km/h @ 6400rpm
94km/h @ 6900rpm	90km/h @ 6400rpm
140km/h @ 6900rpm	134km/h @ 6400rpm

As tested by MOTOR: Heathcote Dragway, 11am, 26 degrees, dry, driver Scott Newman

188km/h @ 6400rpm

257km/h @ 6400rpm 280km/h @ 5720rpm*

280km/h @ **5090rpm***

4th 175km/h @ 6900rpm

5th 229km/h @ 6900rpm 6th 250km/h @ 5750rpm*

7th 250km/h @ 4730rpm* 8th 250km/h @ 3680rpm*

* Manufacturer's claim



The nitty gritty In this case, size does matter





Signature M and AMG quad exhausts. The GLE63 has the better soundtrack

BODY 4-door, 5-seat SUV **DRIVE** all-wheel **ENGINE** 4395cc V8, DOHC, 32v, twin-turbo BORE/STROKE 89.0 x 88.3mm COMPRESSION 10.0:1 **POWER** 423kW @ 6000rpm **TORQUE** 750Nm @ 2200-5000rpm POWER/WEIGHT 186kW/tonne TRANSMISSION 8-speed automatic WEIGHT 2275kg **SUSPENSION (F)** A-arms, coil springs, dampers, anti-roll bar SUSPENSION(R) multi-links, air springs, dampers, anti-roll bar **L/W/H** 4880/1985/1717mm WHEELBASE 2933mm TRACKS 1666/1667mm (f/r) STEERING electrically-assisted rack-and-pinion **BRAKES (F)** 395mm ventilated discs, 6-piston calipers **BRAKES (R)** 385mm ventilated discs, single-piston calipers **WHEELS** 21.0 x 10.0-inch (f); 21 x 11.5-inch (r) **TYRE SIZES** 285/35 R21 (f); 325/30 R21 (r) TYRE Michelin Pilot Super Sports PRICE AS TESTED \$195,100 PROS Incredible dynamics; lovely interior; value CONS Anodyne engine; sub-par steering STARRATING ***

BMW X5 M

BODY	4-000r, 5-seat 50 v
DRIVE	all-wheel
ENGINE	5461cc V8, DOHC, 32v, twin-turbo
BORE/STROKE	98.0 x 90.5mm
COMPRESSION	10.0:1
POWER	430kW @ 5500rpm
TORQUE	760Nm @ 1750-5250rpm
POWER/WEIGHT	189kW/tonne
TRANSMISSION	7-speed automatic
WEIGHT	2270kg
SUSPENSION (F)	A-arms, air springs, dampers, torsion bar
SUSPENSION(R)	multi-links, air springs, dampers, torsion bar
L/W/H	4852/1971/1762mm
WHEELBASE	2915mm
TRACKS	1648/1663mm (f/r)
STEERING	electro-mechanic rack-and-pinion
BRAKES (F)	390mm ventilated discs, 6-piston calipers
BRAKES (R)	345mm ventilated discs, single-piston calipers
WHEELS	21.0 x 10.0-inch (f/r)
TYRE SIZES	295/35 ZR21 (f/r)
TYRE	Michelin Latitude Sports
PRICE AS TESTED	\$193,900
PROS	Amazing engine; feel-good factor
CONS	Infotainment needs a refresh; thirst
STAR RATING	****

RODY 4-door 5-seat SLIV

MERCEDES-AMG GLE 63 S

plenty of leather, but the multimedia screen is neither as big nor as integrated and the operating interface feels clumsy and unintuitive in comparison. You only have to 'write' a sat-nav instruction on a touch-pad once for turning a dial to seem old-fashioned.

It's probably clear by now that the Merc comes second in this comparison. Straight-line pace aside, the GLE 63 is neither as capable nor as rewarding to drive as the X5 M, its interior doesn't feel as special, it's more expensive (before options, anyway) and less fuel efficient, though the BMW won't be winning any 'green car' awards any time soon, either. But that's also not the whole story, as it turns out this is a comparison between a flawed car that's very likeable and an incredibly competent one that isn't.

They're not for the purists, but there is a certain appeal in something so large being able to travel so quickly If you take into account how these cars are going to be driven the vast majority of the time – to the supermarket and on school runs – then the GLE63 is arguably the more enjoyable machine. It's a modern interpretation of the traditional US muscle car; not overly fond of corners, it's a bullet in a straight line and that engine will raise a smile leaving every traffic light.

Conversely, if you're not driving like your hair's on fire, the BMW is a little, well, dull. Admittedly, that is a highly subjective assessment – if the BMW's understated looks and unusual engine note strike a chord then it's a slam dunk, as it's objectively the better car. But we could equally understand why some will choose the AMG without hesitation. Think of it as the difference between the MVP and the fan favourite.



Make every car a sports car: BILSTEIN sport suspensions





The simple addition of BILSTEIN's ultra high-performance range of sports suspension can put you behind the wheel of your very own dream machine. Over five decades of motorsport victories are imbedded in the design of every BILSTEIN damper and the unparalleled quality of our suspension technology comes from driving literally millions of test kilometres under extreme conditions. If you refuse to compromise on driving, and when control, design and quality matter more than anything else, then BILSTEIN has the solution for you. For every curve, every circuit and every metre of tarmac.

BILSTEIN – The Driving Experience.



Geek speak

The complicated explained

by DAVID MORLEY

Flat-plane crankshafts What they are, who does 'em, and why they're good

OU might have heard that the V8 in the new Ford Mustang GT350 and GT350R features a flatplane crankshaft. Some of you will nod sagely, others will silently mouth WTF. The concept is actually not too bizarre, but the technology does have a big effect on how engines feel and sound. So let's start with the basics.

Almost every production V8 engine ever made has a cross-plane crankshaft. That is, if you looked along the length of the crank, you'd see that the big-end journals (where the bottom of the conrod attaches to the crank) are offset at 90 degrees to each other. There are four of them and they visually form a cross shape (hence, cross-plane, depending who you talk to). With this set-up, you get each bank of four cylinders balancing each other, but an uneven firing pulse on each bank. It's this unevenness that gives a traditional V8 that rollicking, rhythmic soundtrack.

But a flat-plane crank has all four journals staggered at 180-degrees from each other, so they all line up on a single plane. In this scenario, you get the two banks of cylinders balancing each other, but without the unevenness on each bank. The big

clue for bystanders on the footpath is the noise. Unlike the conventional V8 noise, you get a less tuneful note more like two four-cylinder engines rather than one V8.

So why do it? Essentially, a flatplane crank will, pound for pound, make more power. That's mainly because the different firing order makes for better cylinder scavenging on the exhaust side. Think of it as passive supercharging. And it can do that without complex (and heavy) exhaust systems with cross-over pipes and what-not. Also, the flatplane crank doesn't need such big, heavy counterweights to smooth out the engine's primary vibrations, so it can spin up faster and rev harder.

road gear like the new GT350. But the lack of those counterweights also means it can have a smaller crankcase, and that's good for small, light race cars.

Flat-plane cranks have been around for a long, long time, mainly in racing applications where the vibes are less important than the outright power of the thing. But some very famous engines have featured a flatplane crank, including luminaries such as the Cosworth DFV, Ferrari V8s (even road-going ones) and the V8 Lotus Esprit.

It's not just V8s that can have a flat-plane crank, either. Most fourcylinder donks use a flat-plane crank and so do engines like the boxer four



Some very famous engines have featured a flat-plane crank, including Cosworth's DFV, Ferrari V8s and the V8 Lotus Esprit

That said, the flat-plane crank lacks rotational balance, meaning it suffers from secondary vibrations and isn't always as nice to sit behind. And that's why it's generally the preserve of race engines or high-performance

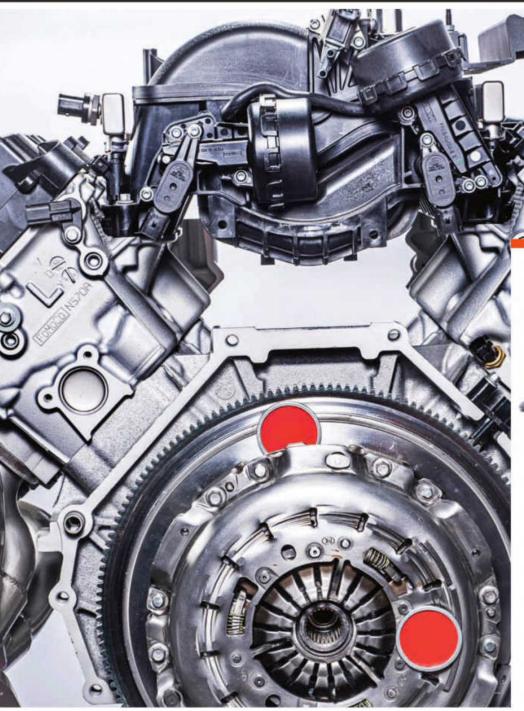
or six as seen in VW Beetles, Suby WRXs and Porsche 911s. The thing is, the inherent vibration in a flatplane design only starts to show up as capacities rise, so a smaller engine has less to lose in the first place. \square

Cranking it upFlat-planes in V8 Supercars

MOST recently, Australian tappet heads have been introduced to the flat-plane crank courtesy of the Erebus AMG V8 Supercars. Standing on the pit wall for the first time, we were all struck by the shrieking howl the German V8s were producing. Turns out, since AMG had to reduce the capacity to 5.0 litres (from 6.2) it required a new crankshaft, and there was no development-cost penalty in going for a flat-plane design. Of course, starting with more or less the V8 from the SLS AMG GT3 racecar, the unit was already dry-sumped. And whaddaya know? When Polestar developed the V8 Supercar engine for the GRM Volvo team, it went for a flat-plane crank, too.



A flat-plane crank helps to deliver the Ferrari 488 GTB's unique engine note





Plane & Simple



1 SOUND OF MUSIC

Crankshaft phasing plays a huge role in an engine's character. In the mid 90s, Yamaha built a parallel twin (with its cylinders laid side by side like half a four-cylinder) motorcycle engine but with a 270-degree offset crank. It sounded and felt exactly like a V-twin.

2 SMALLER BIG-ENDS

Another way to keep an engine compact is to reduce the size of the conrod big-ends. This can mean a smaller crankcase, but it also calls for smaller bearings and, therefore, less bearing surface area. Smaller bearings also means less friction, though.

3 BENT OUT OF SHAPE

Some race and motorcycle engines use roller crankshafts which, instead of being cast in one piece, are pressed together in sections using many tonnes of pressure. These allow the use of caged roller bearings for low friction, but they can also become – literally – twisted out of phase.

4 GETTING TRICKY

The blueprinting process involves making nthdegree changes to make sure the engine in question is exactly to the specs the designer had in mind. In the case of a crankshaft, this process can include grinding of the big-end journals to align the crank to bring the journals into the precise plane.

5 STAYING CROSS-PLANE

If you do stick with a cross-plane V8, the best way to improve efficiency is to run an exhaust that links the two exhaust manifolds before any collector for improved scavenging. But this is bulky and calls for running super-hot pipework over the top of the motor. Not ideal.





\$378* toyotires.com.au

As if made from glue, Toyo's latest hoop slots above the R888 and is a motorsport tyre you can wear to the track. Water best avoided, though.

*235/40 R18

Gripping Roads

Sponsored content

driven to perform



Gripping Roads takes iconic cars through the winding roads that separates drivers from those who just own, operate and maintain a vehicle

LINKING the Southern Highlands with the cliffs, beaches and industry of New South Wales' south coast, Macquarie Pass is eight kilometres of hidden tarmac ribboned into hinterland.

Ascending the Illawarra escarpment above farm land and climbing above the sea, the winding pass is a tough two hours south of Sydney's CBD – a slice of Japanese anime just like *Initial D's* infamous Mount Akina.

Leafy and tranquil, rock walls and sheer drops lurk behind barriers, awaiting the clumsy. Camber and elevation changes meet water seepage and road debris making the

esses, decreasing radius corners and constricted hairpins of Macquarie Pass unsuited to amateurs.

The uphill run is tight and challenging but more forgiving. Speed is easily washed off when a semi-trailer is caught reversing on a turn, or water is cascading across shaded sections. A locally famous pie shop greets drivers and riders at the top, following a lazy long left that showcases the view below.

To take on this south coast voyage on a sunny weekend or public holiday is to practice patience. Best enjoyed between midnight and 7am, the downhill run is where

ability and capacity are tested.

For a domestic Mount Akina, it is fitting to choose the successor to Takumi Fujiwara's AE86, the Toyota 86 (Takumi is a character from *Initial D*).

While the naturally aspirated FA20 may preclude lap records, downhill runs are where the Totoya shines.

This is where Tetsuya
Tada's design philosophy and
commitment to balance exude.
Taught, svelte and sharp, a
lightly tuned 86 is the perfect
complement to Macquarie
Pass. Toyo Proxes R1R provides
aggressive grip through
corners, with the tread needed
to carve through wet tarmac or
loose surfaces.



Toyo's tyre of choice

Proxes R1R

Toyo Proxes R1R is an ultrahigh performance tyre that improves grip everywhere. Providing sharp turn-in and responsive steering feel, the Proxes R1R takes the 86 to a new level.

Car of choice

Toyota 86

The Toyota 86 is built to handle. Its crisp throttle response, low weight, low centre of gravity and focus on driver enjoyment are let down only by poor tyres. That's where Toyo can help.



The used car treasure hunt



Makes Miley Cyrus seem tame

WHILE firms will be trying to plug the gap left by our homegrown sport heroes with all types of American muscle, the Dodge Viper is one yank that'll never have the chance to impress us Aussies.

That's why, huge pricetag aside, we're ogling this topspec GTS that's sprung up on the classifieds in rare circumstances. Sure, \$300K sounds like a laugh for a side-swap car with steering buttons from a 300, but few cars will offer the driving experience of the Detroit-built bullet.

Up front lives the torquiest passenger-car atmo engine on sale – an 8.4-litre V10 with 475kW and 831Nm.

It sends that to its rear axle

(which you practically sit on) through a six-speed manual transmission and blasts its song through pipes that sit under your window.

It all seems unhinged. So much so that come 2017, Fiat Chrysler looks to axe the Viper in light of its scant business case. So this could be your only chance to be snake bitten.



Dodge's Viper is facing the axe in light of falling sales and its unique platform, meaning it'll soon be a sought-after legend



NEW \$599K

2007 Murcielago LP640

All paw, all powerful

NOW \$429,990

SUMMON another \$145K and you can score something a little more sophisticated than the Dodge Viper's brash personality, but with the same vein of drama and madness.

Lamborghini's Murcielago, found here in LP640 specification, offers 471kW from its scintillating V12, which produces that figure right on 8000rpm.

Its all-wheel drive system promises a more restrained driving experience compared to the Viper, but the fact you're handling the V12 via a six-speed manual makes it every as bit as exciting. Nor can you buy a manual V12 drivetrain today.

At 39 per cent cheaper than it cost in 2007, it won't depreciate much from now.



If the Murcielago's appearance wasn't unique enough, few cars offer a V12 with 471kW to play with via a stick shift



The unique car you want is now easier to find





FUEL THIS MONTH 11.4L/100KM | AVERAGE 11.4L/100KM | DISTANCE THIS MONTH 100KM | TOTAL 5523KM

MONTH One

LikedThe grunt. It's got some

DislikedVariable steering darty off-centre, taking some getting used to



favourite MOMENT

Freeway on-ramp, getting reminded how much snot this thing has

Blue Bullet

A warm welcome to our newest resident

MAGINE if Ford put the XR6 Turbo engine in the Focus and made it rear-wheel drive. In 2012 BMW sort of did its version of that in creating the M135i. Not quite an M car and sort of a hot hatch, yet one with a north-south 3.0-litre turbo six sending its not insignificant grunt to a solitary rear-mounted axle. Of course, all hot hatches before it tended to be bumdraggers or come with a driveshaft quartet, but now here was something tempting HSV customers.

But since then, quite a few rivals have popped up. HSV customers are being tempted back by the \$83K, auto 400kW LSA Clubsport. Or even the \$56K, 304kW auto SS-V Redline.

Those more predisposed to hot hatches have the brilliant \$54K DSG Golf R to consider, or Audi's cracking all-claw S3 at \$61K. Higher up still, there's the newly muscled-up A45 AMG (\$76K, but it's due for a price hike).

In short, the M135i has a little extra competition these days.

And the spec sheet suggests it has been treading water. Three years on. same N55 engine (itself getting on six years old), same eight-speed torque converter auto, and more or less same outputs. In June. BMW reheated and restyled the 1-Series range, including M135i (in what BMW calls a "Life Cycle Impulse") and upped power by 5kW, to 240kW at 5800rpm. Torque was unchanged, 450Nm between 1300rpm to 4500rpm. With launch control, the M135i will hurl its 1450kg to 100km/h in 4.9 seconds. All the previously mentioned rivals are just as fast, or faster, to 100 clicks at least.

But styling aside, there's one area

in particular BMW hasn't sat still: the price. Consider that when it arrived in 2012, the M135i was \$72,400, for the eight-speed auto, but it was an extra \$2200 for the adaptive dampers and a bordering-on-taking-the-piss \$3500 for sat-nav – \$78,100 all up.

Today you can effectively get the same car for \$62,900 – auto, dampers, and sat-nav, for \$15,200 less.

It has absolutely everything to do with why the facelifted M135i won this year's \$50K-\$100K class at Bang For Your Bucks. And it wasn't just the data that brought home the trophy; the M135i had the judges fawning, too.

With 22 cars to test on the day, the drive was all too brief, so we're excited to welcome the exact Bangwinning car to the *MOTOR* Garage for four months. It's done the press rounds already, so the new-car smell is on the





way out and the odo on the way up, closing in on 6000km. You won't be reading about any run-in periods here.

Instead we'll check its claimed combined consumption of 7.5L/100km and report on myriad things you only notice after you've left the dealership.

And we hope not to become a broken record about the lack of a proper mechanical limited-slip diff – such a thing is becoming like a manual gearbox, an oddity 90 per cent of customers couldn't care less for. And so it enters the list of options.

We've clocked precious few kilometres on our Estoril Blue M135i this month, but much like at Bang, it didn't take long to notice the diff, or lack of. The M135i has proper turbo six-cylinder grunt – bags of torque – and sounds snarly. But it took just one opening of the taps in first gear to encounter an angry spike of revs but

Over the coming months, there'll be a whole lot more sideways activity in store for the M135i no accompanying rear-end wriggle – the telltale sign of a diff wide open.

That said, it's no wonder the engine hasn't changed much: it's a gem, packing grunt and character. Same, too, the ZF-sourced eight-speed auto, whose behaviour mimics that of a twin-clutch so closely we had to double-check it, in fact, isn't one.

We're just starting to reacquaint ourselves with this rear-drive hot hatch thing, and it feels novel all over again. Hopefully, in the coming months, the love only blossoms. – **DC**

We're excited to welcome the exact Bang-winning car to the MOTOR Garage



FUEL THIS MONTH 14.9L/100KM | AVERAGE 15.0L/100KM | DISTANCE THIS MONTH 608KM | TOTAL 10,637KM

US Occupation High times mark the end of Great White's residency

MONTH Liked Threading down Great Ocean Road **Disliked** Handing back washing it before

MOMENT

Reading its corner g-forces on the head-up display

OWN along Victoria's breezy south-west coast breathes a small clan of towering Californian Redwood. Planted in the 1930s, they've thrived in Australian conditions, which is a little like the

Harbouring its own slice of Americana – GM's small-block V8 – since 1999, the Commodore has developed into a world-class sedan; one that has been shifted across the Pacific for waiting Yank buyers on more than one occasion.

Commodore's story.

So with our VF Series I Commodore SS Redline not only due for replacement, but tea time fast approaching at Fisherman's Bend, we

thought taking it to see the Redwoods would be like two veterans meeting neither fought in each other's war, but both have managed to survive with the help of a cross-pacific alliance.

It also allowed us to answer a question asked when Great White first landed in our garage: is the Redline one of the muscle greats?

The journey starts off boring enough on the M1, but you don't need to swear at Camrys until after Lorne, where speed limits raise to 80km/h and the road responds accordingly, with corners that ride undulations and tighten around cliff faces.

Here the Commodore's steering reminds us of its lightness and accuracy; handy when you encounter a tourist pottering along in the wrong lane. Like a lot of electrically-assisted systems, however, more feedback and feel would help in judging the changes in dampness levels on the Great Ocean Road.

Eventually we turn right onto Skenes Creek Road, which snakes away from the coast and up through dense vegetation. This provides us with another opportunity to size up the Commodore's handling and enjoy the high grip levels and friendliness of its chassis.

After 20 minutes, a sign marked 'Beech Forest C159' directs us left. We pass through denser forest on much slower roads until finally, after 16km and a wrong turn, we reach Binns



The unsealed road takes a while a low speed, but, eventually, Aire River Bridge and the adjoining pristine Californian Redwood picnic area come into view.

We dive into the forest, and after peering up at their dizzying canopies, it's easy to believe what we have read. With Australia's rich and damp Victorian soil, these Americans have grown faster than a teenager in Chernobyl. Since plantation, they've spurted 60m high and are billed to double that within the next century.

It gets us thinking. As far as alliances go, the Batman and Robin relationship between Australia and America is a recurring theme. Often, it's Australia in the bright green undies looking over America's shoulder in international conflicts.

But like the Redwoods, where a small part of America exists in something so Australian, the Commodore dons the hero's cape.

Admittedly, the novelty of MOTOR's

And it didn't matter if we were on the racetrack, the highway or in the city; we came away impressed.

We won't miss its chunky A-pillars, weirdo clutch bite point and muffled engine note, but we know two of those things have already been fixed in VF Series II form.

We also enjoy more thoughtful infotainment button layouts in other cars. And we'll save some coin by letting our fuel card breathe a bit.

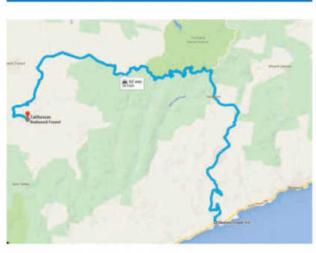
But for sheer breadth of ability

– hauling five people around
comfortably, sliding around a
racetrack and soaking up kilometres

– the SS-V Redline is a stellar effort,
and few other cars can canvas such
talents at just \$55K.

What about the new VF II? Personally, I like the VF I's more subtle looks, but I can say that with an LS3 planted in the Redline's front end, it has far surpassed that of Great White's ilk. – **LC**

On the track, the highway or in the city; we came away impressed







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Chart attack

Demons, duds & debutants

Fast car sales

October 2015

MERCEDES-AMG's newcomer, the GT, moved seven units in October, which is quite good considering, as a model, it offers a tenth of the variants a 911 does. Porsche only sold 16 of its icon, which saw the 911 drop from the top 10 and be replaced by Aston Martin. That said, behind Porsche's volume sellers (SUVs), the 911 remains its most popular model. Alfa Romeo's 4C is also proving favoured, selling more units so far this year (141) than Aston Martin has as a company.



Top ten movers

SEP	OCT	YTD	YTD +/-
97	90	454	354%
48	61	523	325%
8	1	84	250%
29	25	320	92%
14	9	144	64%
4	0	29	53%
3	4	37	48%
3	2	20	43%
59	40	452	35%
55	15	111	22%
	97 48 8 29 14 4 3 3 59	97 90 48 61 8 1 29 25 14 9 4 0 3 4 3 2 59 40	97 90 454 48 61 523 8 1 84 29 25 320 14 9 144 4 0 29 3 4 37 3 2 20 59 40 452



Top ten losers

C. test				
CAR	SEP	OCT	YTD	YTD +/-
Mini Coupe/Roadster	1	0	12	-87%
Chrysler 300	72	73	763	-49%
Mercedes-Benz SLK	31	16	193	-47%
Citroen DS3	2	1	66	-45%
Subaru BRZ	45	34	531	-35%
Rolls-Royce	3	0	24	-29%
Porsche Panamera	4	6	52	-29%
Toyota 86	246	231	2600	-28%
Mercedes-Benz SL	3	3	49	-26%
Renault-Sport Megane	41	43	312	-22%



top-ten debut Aston Martin. While seen as a niche sportscar maker, the firm has fattened up its range recently with 13 different cars to choose from should you find yourself in one of its showrooms. Also, the arrival of a DB9 send-off special, the GT, in both coupe and convertible versions should boost interest.

22

PER CENT

the HEAT

WINNERS AND LOSERS OF OCTOBER

47 PER CENT

IF YOU look at the sales figures for 2015, you wouldn't think the SLK is in much trouble. It has so far trounced its arch-rival, the BMW Z4, and kept perennial favourite, the Porsche Boxster, in check. Truth is, though, the biggest beating of all is how short it stacks up against last year's SLK sales. In its fourth year, maybe the SLK is starting to slow.



Coming soon

2015 / 2016

December 2015

Ford Mustang McLaren 675LT



Mazda MX-5 2.0-litre Mazda's mite gets more mighty with new engine. Alfa Romeo 4C Spider

Early 2016 Audi S8 Plus Bentley Bentayga

Bentley's all-conquering SUV muscles its way into the bustling SUV market.

Lexus GS F

Lexus's E-Class rival scores a 5.0-litre N/A V8.

Peugeot 308 GTI



Porsche 911 (991.2)

Carrera turns to turbo power for the first time.

Jaguar XF

Mercedes E-Class rival is stiffer and lighter.

Ford Focus RS Ford XR6 Sprint

Fire-spitting Falcon to send off the Barra engine.

Audi R8

Ingolstadt's supercar drops the option of a V8 and picks up more power with the V10.

Mercedes-Benz C-Class Coupe



Mercedes-Benz C450 AMG 4MATIC McLaren Sport Series

Woking's 911 fighter promises class-leading performance.

Later in 2016

Audi S4

Comes with a new 260kW turbo six-pot.

Alfa Romeo Giulia

Alfa's 3-Series fighting sedan debuts.

BMW M2



Widebody successor due for the deliciously evil 1M.

BMW M4 GTS

Two-door icon cools off with a water-injected powerplant.

Jaguar F-Pace Rolls-Royce Dawn

The brand's new stunning two-door convertible.

Nissan NISMO range



Nissan fuels Australia's hunger for performance models. Frightening 441kW GT-R the highlight of the range.

Porsche Boxster and Cayman

Now with turbo flat-four powerplants

Fiat 124 Spider

Fiat and Mazda's love child will bring an Italian touch to the classic Japanese roadster. Abarth version tipped to follow.

Honda NSX



Honda desperately needs a jab in the arm to get back in the sportscar game. The NSX is it, if it ever arrives.

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Skid marks

David Morley



"If Bondini could fix something and somehow make it faster, well, that was nirvana"

Y OLD mate Bondini put his cue in the rack a few days ago. He'd smoked 50-a-day since he was about 13 and had two heart attacks and a triple bypass almost 20 years ago. Nobody was more surprised than him to find himself blowing out 80 candles back in February.

None of which makes it any easier to deal with, and every time I look out the window of the Melbourne Bloke Centre I'm looking straight at his factory and his old ute, which is growing cobwebs while his family work out what the hell to do with it.

Bondini was well aware that he was part self-taught rocket-scientist and part madman. About 50-50, I'd say. But having realised that many years ago, he subsequently understood that he also had the right to think laterally and apply that sideways thought process to everything he considered and everything he did. And that extended from politics (he was about as left as anybody I've ever met, and believe you me, I've knocked about with some lefties in my time) to spiritualism and everything else right down to how many times a steak on a barbecue should be turned. A genuine suburban genius.

He was granted this mental freedom by order of the fact that he was not classically trained much beyond an apprenticeship with the Melbourne Tramways back in the 1950s as a motor mechanic. And because he, therefore, hadn't been force-fed the education industry's views and protocols, he was free to develop the Bondini method and apply it to

I was required to scuttle across the car park to drink his coffee and discuss the world with the old bugger.

Some days he'd ring me early to tell me that if I wanted a cuppa that morning, I'd have to stop and get a bottle of milk on the way to work. By the time I staggered up the steps with the milk, he'd have the coffee made in a pair of dirty mugs that got washed every September, whether they needed it or not.

Bondini hated throwing anything away. Not in a hoarding sense, but he hated wastefulness in design. And he loathed buying something from a shop if there was any chance he could make it himself.

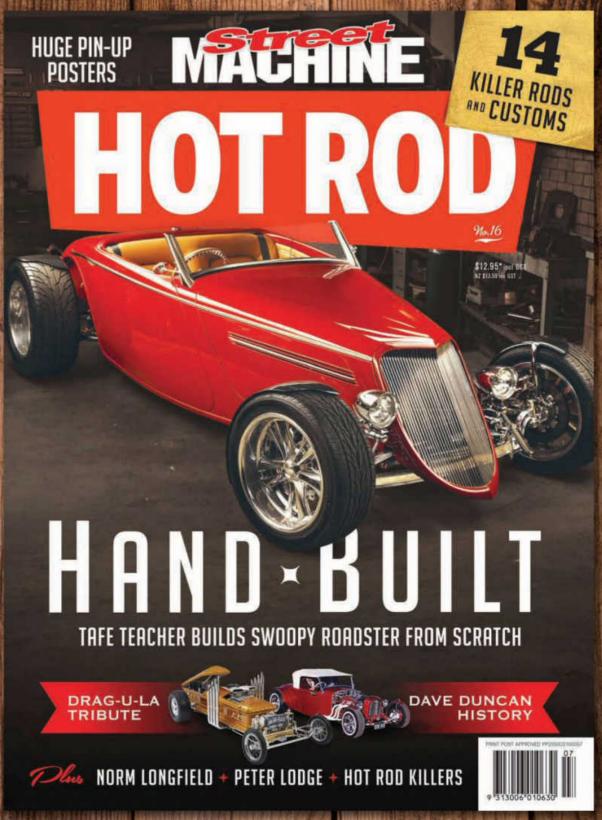
This led him to build a replica of a 1950s Moto Guzzi racer from a pile of bits and pieces. Most notable was the frame's main-tube which began life as a Valiant tail-shaft. I first saw the bike as a pile of tubes in the corner of his workshop. A few months later, I was riding those tubes around the car park.

At his funeral yesterday, one of his sons mentioned that if Bondini could fix something himself, that was good. If he could fix it and improve it, that was even better. And if he could fix it and somehow make it faster, well, that was nirvana.

Today was the first day I have been able to make myself do it, but I actually bought a little bottle of milk and some instant coffee to work so I could brew up for smoko break. And for the first time since I moved in here 16 years ago, I made my own coffee in my kitchenette and drank it without Bondini.



STEERE ENTER Suesents



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Guest rant

Jez Spinks



"Understeer isn't necessarily the antithesis of driving entertainment"

HE NATURE versus nurture debate rages among psychologists, but there might be fewer fisticuffs over the notion that geography can influence an individual's driving preferences.

Most Aussies I know grew up driving some form of Falcon or Commodore – or a ute. After all, it would be un-Australian not to embrace the rear-drive-or-nothing mentality.

But I'm non-Australian, and can confess to something of a predilection for front-drivers. As a Pom, my early experiences were rooted in front-drivers – learning in a Renault 5, spending my first few licensed months in a mate's 1977 Datsun 120A FII Coupe, before owning of a couple of Ford Fiestas. This was followed by the superb Ford Puma you all sadly missed out on.

My only dabble with rear-wheel drive in my formative driving years was another mate's car – a Daihatsu Charmant – which was most definitely not charming in the handling stakes.

Before you inundate MOTOR with penned hate-mail or protests on social media, I'm not suggesting we should all be embracing vehicles that cruel momentum by pushing their noses towards the other side of the bitumen in plough-on undie-steer, booking you on a one-way ticket to Armco and a change of trousers.

The ability to pitch a car sideways through a bend – accurately and quickly balancing throttle and steering inputs – will always be the highest of skills in the art of car control, not to mention a riot of immense satisfaction. And neutrality is the holy grail of handling if you're looking to go from point A to point B as quickly as possible, or to set lap records.

Drifting an E46 M3 at Phillip Island and going in anything but a straight line on snow and ice in a last-gen C63 AMG remain two of the most hilarious days I've ever had behind a wheel.

But I will argue that understeer isn't necessarily the antithesis of driving entertainment – you just need to be in a good front-wheel-drive car.

Understeer is simply a party-pooper in a car that powers its back axle only (despite the fact I once had some fun of the perverse type trying to keep a Smart Fortwo out of the bushes).

And satisfaction is best derived from an all-paw car when on the limit it's capable of being returned from understeer to a more neutral, or even oversteery, attitude by

pressing on rather than lifting off the throttle (a cross for the A45 AMG, but a tick for the WRX, then).

Find a front-driver with a chassis offering throttle adjustability, however, and understeer can not only be endearing but genuinely entertaining.

You can even take a comparison of two renowned front-wheel-drive performance models as an example: the Golf GTI and Megane RS.

The Frenchie is notably quicker than the German, deploying its mechanical limited-slip diff to amazing effect to extract itself from apexes with speed bordering on black magic. Yet the GTI is arguably as much fun, because it's less capable of flattering an average driver. To pull speed out of the VW's hat, a greater onus is placed on the driver – even with Golf's electronic interpretation of an LSD – to more perfectly judge corner entry speed before balancing tyre grip as you complete the radius.

It's not just about tricky front diffs, either. In regular city-car guise, the Fiesta, VW Polo and Renault Clio are also a hoot to drive, as you derive satisfaction from the way you can slide the front end through corners, making adjustments to throttle pressure to keep them balanced on the tightrope of neutrality. Four-wheel drifting, anyone?

Preferences are even found among the world's fastest drivers. Lewis Hamilton savours some oversteer, yet Fernando Alonso is renowned for inducing some understeer to achieve his stunning pace (though a change of F1 teams might prove more effective for the Spaniard).

If you are more of a Hamilton, I'm not going to tell you oversteer is over-rated, but I will insist that understeer shouldn't be under-rated.

















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NULON

Fast guide to quick cars



- Hot Source explained

 All performance figures are manufacturer claims, those in italics are as-tested by MOTOR. Figures for an automatic variant have an asterisk.

 Prices listed are manufacturer RRP, exclusive of on-roads. "DA" denotes driveaway price.

 Italicised fuel consumption figures are those collected on test.

 Engines are listed by configuration, capacity and means of induction. For example, I4/1.6T= turbocharged 1.6-litre inline four. Power figures made by an engine's over-boost function are contained in brackets.
- Red denotes new addition, Green denotes a model update.

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
绿	Ab	arth										www.fiat.com.au/abarth
595 Turismo ★★☆☆☆	Nov 14	\$34,000 (5m) \$36,000 (5s)	14/1.4T	118/5500	230/3000	front	1035	114	8.99	16.55	5.4	Great drivetrain; looks good; cheaper than before Still way too expensive; major handling and ride issues
595 Competizione ★★☆☆☆	Oct 14	\$37,000 (5m) \$39,000 (5s)	14/1.4T	118/5500	230/3000	front	1076	110	7.4	-	5.4	 Monza exhaust is fantastic; reasonably fun to drive Avoid the MTA gearbox like the plague
595C Competizione ★★☆☆☆	Dec 14	\$39,500 (5m) \$41,500 (5s)	14/1.4T	118/5500	230/3000	front	1076	110	8.6	16.2	5.4	Can finally have the drop-top with a manual Your mates won't ride with you anymore
696 Biposto ★★☆☆☆		\$65,000 (5m)	14/1.4T	140/5500	250/3000	front	997	140	5.9	-	6.5	Mad, bad, and cute as a puppy; collectablity Ludicrous spend for a mini hatch
(1)	Al	fa Rom	eo									www.alfaromeo.com.au
Mito QV ★★★☆☆		\$32,000 (6m)	14/1.4T	125/5500	250/2500	front	1145	109	7.5	-	6.0	©Zesty engine; looks funky; Italianate cool Falls well short of the class benchmarks dynamically
Giulietta QV ★★★☆☆	Jul 15	\$39,000 (6m) \$42,000 (6dc)	14/1.7T	177/6000*	340/1900	front	1299	133	6.02*	14.29*	7.0	 Newly updated with 4C drivetrain; stylish looks Ride issues; instrusive ESP; driving position
4¢ ★★★★	May 15	\$89,000 (6dc)	14/1.7T	177/6000	350/2200	rear	1025	173	4.5	-	6.8	OClever constuction; a proper driving event Intrusive engine note; suspicions about its ride on Oz roads
4C Spider ★★★★		\$99,000 (6dc)	14/1.7T	177/6000	350/2200	rear	1035	171	4.5	-	-	● An uncompromised transition to open-air thrills ■ Inconvenient DIY roof stowage
	As	ton Ma	rtin									www.astonmartin.com
V8 Vantage ★★★☆☆	Jun 06	\$231,000 (6m) \$246,900 (7s)	V8/4.7	313/7300	470/5000	rear	1630	192	5.86	14.00	13.9	 Stunning looks; highly capable handling; oh the noise Not really that fast; increasingly feeling its age
V8 Vantage S ★★★☆☆		\$251,700 (6m) \$267,600 (7s)	V8/4.7	321/7300	490/5000	rear	1610	199	-	-	12.9	OLighter and sharper than the base car with more grunt Needs an even stricter diet to match rivals
V8 Vantage Roadster ★★★☆☆	Apr 12	\$260,000 (6m) \$273,800 (7s)	V8/4.7	313/7300	470/5000	rear	1710	183	-	-	-	Even better access to that wailing V8 Extra weight hurts performance and dynamics
V8 Vantage S Roadster ★★★☆☆		\$280,600 (6m) \$294,400 (7s)	V8/4.7	321/7300	490/5000	rear	1690	190	-	-	12.9	Great compromise between show and go Robotised manual is a pain; getting expensive
V12 Vantage S ★★★☆		\$354,300 (7s)	V12/5.9	421/6750		rear	1665		3.9	-	16.3	Psychotic performance, with dynamics and looks to match Lacks the V8's styling purity; frighteningly thirsty
V12 Vantage S Roadster ★★★☆		\$383,525 (7s)	V12/5.9	421/6750	620/5750		1745		3.9	-	16.3	Magic engine noise; sweet dynamics for a drop top OLot of power for an open-top body; gearbox frustrates
DB9 ★★★☆☆		\$349,500 (6a)	V12/5.9		620/5500		1785		4.6	-	14.3	OClassy GT perfect for living out James Bond fantasies Not as spacious as its size suggests; rivals are much faster
DB9 GT ★★★☆☆		\$368,500 (6a)	V12/5.9		620/5500		1785		4.5			 Ageing DB9 given a send-off with more power, exclusive kit Tech updates just a little too late
DB9 Volante ★★★☆☆		\$380,500 (6a)	V12/5.9	380/6500		rear	1890		4.5	-	16.5	Just as fast as the coupe in a straight line but a bit wobbly in the bends; likes a drink
DB9 Volante GT ★★★☆☆		\$399,500 (6a)	V12/5.9	380/6500		rear	1890		4.5		16.5	Volante gives you access to the V12's extra snarlnot the most thoroughbred of grand tourers
Vanquish ★★★☆	Sep 14	\$484,995 (8a)	V12/5.9		630/5500		1739		3.8	-	-	More power and eight-speed auto for MY15 Ride is now not very GT-like; thirsty
Vanquish Volante ★★★☆☆		\$521,995 (8a)	V12/5.9		630/5500		1844		4.0	-	-	Carbonfibre construction should mean no loss of rigidity Scary pricetag; No Aston press cars in Oz
Rapide S ★★☆☆		\$378,500 (8a)	V12/5.9	411/6650	630/5500	rear	1990	207	4.9	-		 Now has the power to match its jaw-dropping looks Rear seats really just for kids; small boot

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

MODEL
TESTED
PRICE
ENGINE
KW/RPM
NM/RPM
DRIVE
KERB KG
KW/TONNE
0-100 KM/H
FUEL CONS
PROS & CONS

TOP 3

HOT HATCHES



RS275 Trophy-R \$61,990 The best front driver ever?



VW Golf R \$52,740 Lifted its game markedly



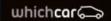
M-B A45 AMG \$75,800 Supercar slayer



Alfa Romeo's 4C salutes the sun

ALFA Romeo has stuffed the 4C's roof in a bag, literally. The new 4C Spider has dropped its top and employed a removable cloth roof that folds into a bag stored in the boot. The rest of the car is mechanically identical to the coupe, relying on a 1.75-litre turbo four for 177kW and 350Nm. Its only spec change comes in the form of weight; the Spider 10kg heavier than the Coupe.

MODEL	TESTEC	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RP	NM/RP	DRIVE	KERB K	KW/T0	0-100 ×	0-400N	FUEL CO	PROS &
and	Au	ıdi										www.audi.com.au
A1 Sportback 1.4 TFSI Sport	Aug 15	\$39,900 (7dc)	14/1.8T	141/5400	250/1250	front	1205	117	6.9	-	5.9	■ Baby hot hatch with trendy looks and quality interior ■ Hard to justify extra \$12K over excellent Polo GTI
S1 Sportback	Oct 15	\$49,900 (7dc)	14/2.0T	170/6000	370/1600	all	1340	127	5.68	13.89	7.1	Cracking pace; involving dynamics; looks quite cool With options costs the same as S3, which makes no sense
A3 1.8 TFSI		\$43,100 (7dc)	14/2.0T	132/6200	250/1250	front	1280	103	7.3	-	5.6	Surprising turn of pace; agile handling; classy feel Not particularly exciting; Golf GTI money
A3 1.8 TFSI quattro		\$46,100 (7dc)	14/2.0T	132/6200	250/1250	all	1380	96	6.8	-	6.6	Quattro adds all-weather security and pace Extra 100kg hurts performance and economy
S3 Sportback	Jun 14	\$61,100 (6m/6dc)	14/2.0T	210/6500	380/1800	all	1425	144	4.94	13.21	10.2	More power and less weight makes S3 faster than ever Still feels a bit 'safe'; we don't get the Euro-spec 22lkW
RS3 Sportback	Dec 15	\$78,900 (6m/6dc)	15/2.5T	270/6800	465/1625	all	1520	178	4.3	-	8.1	Searing pace; warbly five-pot; improved dynamics Looks a bit sensible; could be more involving
S3 Sedan	Dec 14	\$63,400 (6m/6dc)	14/2.0T	210/6500	380/1800	all	1450	142	5.0	-	6.9	Sleek looks, compact size, pokey performance; value We'd still have the lighter hatch
S3 Cabriolet		\$70,110 (6dc)	14/2.0T	210/6200	380/1800	all	1620	130	5.5	-	7.1	Finally, a good-looking small convertible Inevitable compromises, but not as much as you'd think
A4 2.0 TFSI quattro		\$57,100 (6m) \$59,900 (7dc)	I4/2.0T	165/6250	350/1500	all	1530	108	6.4	-	6.6	Classy interior and a surprisingly able drive Barely raises the pulse above idle
A4 3.0 TFSI quattro		\$92,900 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	200/4780	400/2150	all	1610	124	5.4	-	8.1	● Terrific Q-car; plenty of grip and grunt ● Massive price premium doesn't really feel worth it
\$4 ★★★#☆		\$104,610 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	245/5500	440/2900	all	1705	144	5.0	-	8.1	Cracking supercharged six and polished dynamics Looks like any other A4; sports diff is optional
S4 Avant ★★★☆☆		\$108,110 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	245/5500	440/2900	all	1750	140	5.1	-	8.4	More attractive than the sedan; space for the dog Usual A4 gripes – disinterested steering and chassis
RS4 Avant ★★★★☆	Apr 14	\$151,010 (7dc)	V8/4.2	331/8250	430/4000	all	1870	177	4.93	13.08	10.7	 Wicked engine; incredible grip; can swallow a family Gets pricey when you start ticking options boxes
A5 2.0 TF\$I		\$75,400 (6m) \$77,300 (7dc)	14/2.0T	155/6000	350/1500	all	1510	103	6.4	-	6.8	Sweet spot of the 'non-S/RS' A5 range; manual option Bang for your buck factor isn't too flash
A5 3.0 TF\$I ★★★☆☆		\$98,910 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	200/6500	400/2150	all	1650	121	5.8	-	8.1	Sexy coupe is surprisingly agile; benchmark interior quality Steering lacks feel; can't match a 4-Series dynamically
A5 Sportback 3.0 TFSI ★★★☆☆		\$98,910 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	200/6500	400/2150	all	1715	117	6.0	-	8.1	● Engine is a peach; coupe-hatch body looks good ● BMW's 435i Gran Coupe is a sweeter steer
A5 Cabriolet 3.0 TFSI		\$111,010 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	200/6500	400/2150	all	1850	108	6.3	-	8.5	Gorgeous body; smooth V6; excellent roof operation Not a sports car, very heavy; quite thirsty
\$5 ★★★☆		\$119,510 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	245/7000	440/2900	all	1675	142	4.9	-	8.1	● Looks great, sounds great and drives nicely ● We miss the old V8 and its six-speed manual 'box
S5 Sportback ★★★☆☆		\$119,510 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	245/7000	440/2900	all	1745	140	5.1	-	8.1	Offers plenty of pace in an inconspicuous body Does that really sound appealing?
S5 Cabriolet ★★★☆		\$129,510 (7dc)	V6/3.0S	245/7000	440/2900	all	1880	130	5.4	-	8.5	Brilliant V6 sounds mega with the roof down Body flex means it suffers in the bends
RS5 ★★★★☆	Jan 13	\$157,510 (7dc)	V8/4.2	331/8250	430/4000	all	1725	191	4.52	12.66	10.5	Continual updates have made it a genuine super coupe Ride can be terse; a C63 or M3 is still a more exciting drive
RS5 Cabriolet ★★★☆	Jan 14	\$176,510 (7dc)	V8/4.2	331/8250	430/4000	all	1930	191	4.9	-	10.7	olncredible soundtrack; roof-down refinement oweighs a tonne, two of them, in fact; scuttle shake
A6 3.0 TDI Biturbo		\$124,900 (8a)	V6/3.0TTD	235/3900	650/1400	all	1835	123	5.0	-	6.1	 Incredible power and torque make this A6 haul Diesel still lacks performance cred; heavy front end
\$6 ★★★☆	Jun 15	\$169,510 (7dc)	V8/4.0TT	331/6400	550/1400	all	1895	175	4.4	-	9.4	Classy, comfortable and bloody quick; huge grunt Lacks dynamic sparkle; sports exhaust is an option
RS6 Avant	Feb 14	\$229,110 (8a)	V8/4.0TT	412/6600	700/1400	all	1935	213	3.93	11.89	15.47	oIncredible performance; involving handling; beautiful interior oErm, the ride's a bit firm and it's a b-i-g car. That's about it
A7 Sportback 3.0 TDI Biturbo ★★★☆		\$144.900 (8a)	V6/3.0TTD	235/4600	650/1450	all	1895	124	5.2	-	6.1	Brilliant cabin; one of the world's best diesels Lacks the excitement of the blown V6
S7 Sportback ★★★★☆	Jun 15	\$179,510 (7dc)	V8/4.0TT	331/6400	550/2900	all	1955	171	4.57	12.69	9.3	● Just like the S6 but with added style, inside and out ● Huge weight; not the most elegant of dancers
RS7 Sportback ★★★★☆	Jan 15	\$241,610 (8a)	V8/4.2TT	412/6600	750/1750	all	1920	215	3.90	11.87	14.4	◆ An RS6 that's been to modelling class You'd have to love the looks to choose it over RS6
A8 4.2 TDI ★★★☆	May 11	\$249,900 (8a)	V8/4.2TD	258/4000	800/1750	all	1995	148	5.5	-	7.6	 Thunderous twin-turbo V8 diesel; first-class cabin Ride can't match its rivals; you feel like a chauffeur
\$8 ★★★☆	Aug 14	\$280,610 (8a)	V8/4.0TT	382/5800	650/1700	all	1990	192	4.1	-	9.6	● Hilarious performance for a two-tonne limo ● Performance advantage irrelevant in Australia
TT 2.0 TFSI Sport ★★★★☆	May 15	\$71,950 (6m) \$74,950 (6dc)	I4/2.0T	169/6200	370/1600	front	1230	137	6.0	-	5.9	 ● Great chassis; rorty exhaust note; great interior ● Evolutionary styling; pricey with options
TT 2.0 TFSI Sport Quattro ★★★☆	Nov 15	\$77,950 (6dc)	14/2.0T	169/6200	370/1600	all	1335	127	5.32	13.64	6.4	 Quattro adds traction and security; improves pace Adds over 100kg and is not really needed
TTS ★★★☆	Jan 16	\$99,900 (6dc)	14/2.0T	210/6200	380/1800	all	1385	152	4.7	-	6.8	 New TTS continues the tradition as a sweet steer Styled a little softly
TTS Roadster ★★★☆	Jan 16	\$103,900 (6dc)	14/2.0T	210/6200	380/1800	all	1470	143	5.0	-	6.9	● A high tech, well-sorted convertible ● Costs the same as Porsche's Boxster
TT 2.0 TFSI Roadster ★★★☆	Sep 15	\$81,500 (6dc)	14/2.0T	169/6200	370/1600	all	1410	120	5.6	-	6.4	● Loses its roof, but retains that crucial sportscar feel ● Feels less potent than rivals; quattro only
R8 4.2 FSI ★★★☆		\$279,110 (6m) \$286,690 (7dc)	V8/4.2	316/7900	430/4500	all	1585	199	4.3*	-	12.4*	R8 is even better with its new face and twin-clutch 'box Tyre rumble; not the quickest supercar around; almost dead
R8 Spyder 4.2 FSI ★★★★☆	Jun 13	\$308,010 (6m) \$315,510 (7dc)	V8/4.2	316/7900	430/4500	all	1685	187	4.5*	-	12.6*	Turns just as many heads as V10 Spyder for \$80K less Between V8 and V10 coupes on price, a dilemma in itself



MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS	
R8 5.2 FSI ★★★★		\$366,510 (7dc)	V10/52	386/8000	530/6500	all	1645	235	3.6*	-	13.1*	 Acceleration; handling; noticeably more potent than V8 Only aggressive inside the cabin, not outside; slow steering 	TOP 3
R8 Spyder 5.2 FSI	Jan 12	\$395,410 (7dc)	V10/52	386/8000	530/6500	all	1745	221	4.33	12.28	13.3	Supercar experience enhanced by no roof Not really affordable; no more manual option	DADY
R8 5.2 FSI Plus	Mar 14W	\$407,810 (7dc)	V10/52	404/8000	540/6500	all	1570	257	3.57*	11.48*	12.9*	Frightfully fast; that V10 wail; almost fool-proof at the limit Slow steering; understeer balance; it's Huracán money	BABY
RS Q3	Dec 14	\$81,510 (7dc)	15/2.5T	250/6700	450/1600	all	1655	151	4.8	-	8.6	Updated model faster than ever; surprisingly fun in corners The ultimate oxymoron: performance off-road mini SUV?	HATCHE
SQ5 3.0 TDI	Jul 13	\$91,700 (7dc)	V6/3.0TD	230/3900	650/1450	all	1995	115	5.1	-	6.8	Cracks its segment wide open; diesel sounds fantastic Tyre roar; punishing ride; jury's out on the steering	I COLD
8	Be	ntley										www.bentleymotors.com	8_8_ <u>=</u>
+\$21,600) Continental GT V8		\$402,600 (8a)	V8/4.0TT	373/6000	660/1700	all	2220	168	4.8	-	10.6	Not much slower than the W12; awesome soundtrack	Ford Fiesta ST \$25,990
★★★☆ \$22,200) Continental GT V8 S		\$427,900 (8a)	V8/4.0TT	389/6000	680/1700	all	2220	175	4.3	12.3	10.7	Still weighs too much; 'S' worth the extra A superb luxury grand tourer; outrageously fast Too because idea hit itself on his whole.	Massive fun, tiny pric
*★★★☆ \$24,600) Continental GTC V8		\$443,700 (8a)	V8/4.0TT	373/6000	660/1700	all	2395	155	5.0	-	10.9	Too heavy; ride a bit jiggly on big wheels Superb quality; even better noise than hardtop	2
★★★☆☆ (+\$25,200) Continental GTC V8 S		\$471,200 (8a)	V8/4.0TT	389/6000	680/1700	all	2395	162	4.7	-	11.1	Smaller engine occasionally struggles with the weight Four-seat drop-top motoring par excellence	0_0
****** \$22,430) Continental GT W12		\$431,300 (8a)	W12/6.0TT	434/6000	720/1700	all	2245	193	4.3	-	14.2	Suffers a bit dynamically; a bit blustery top-down Swift, quiet, smooth and opulent	Renault Clio RS \$29,290
★★★☆ (†\$23,900) Continental GT Speed		\$485,200 (8a)	W12/6.0TT	467/6000	820/1700	all	2245	208	4.2	-	14.5	Looks a lot like the old one More class, more power, more exclusivity	Driving and sex appe
(+\$27,000) Continental GTC Speed		\$534,400 (8a)	W12/6.0TT	467/6000	820/2000	all	2350	198	4.4	-	14.9	 Drinks like a bunch of Pommie soccer fans World's fastest four-seat convertible 	3rd
★★★☆☆ Flying Spur V8		\$378,197 (8a)	V8/4.0TT	373/6000	660/2000	all	2342	159	5.2	-	10.9	Surely the world's most pointless accolade?British alternative to an S63 AMG	A 0
★★★☆☆ Flying Spur W12	Dec 13	\$423,160 (8a)	W12/6.0TT	460/6000	800/2000	all	2400	192	4.6	-	14.7	Not as fast or as dynamic as the Germans Huge pace; unbelievably comfortable ride	Audi S1
***** Mulsanne		\$662,858 (8a)	V8/6.75TT	377/4200	1020/1750	rear	2610	150	5.3	-	16.9	Can't hide from its heft; low-speed steering's a little heavy Opulent old-school Bentley surprisingly dynamic	\$49,900 Big-money pocket r
**** Mulsanne Speed		\$733,387 (8a)	V8/6.75TT	395/4200	1100/1750	rear	2610	151	4.8	-	14.6	 Looks cross-eyed; fearsomely expensive and thirsty The torquiest car on sale in Australia – 1100Nm! (At 1750rpm!) 	
***												 2.6 tonnes can only be so dynamic 	
U	BN	νıν										www.bmw.com.au	тор з
125i hatch ★★★☆☆	Sep 12	\$48,900 (6m/8a)	14/2.0T	160/5000	310/1350	rear	1345	119	6.80	14.70	8.2	 Torquey, responsive engine and decent steering Adaptive dampers a must-have; performance a little soft 	SEDAN
M135i ★★★☆	Nov 15	\$62,900 (6m/8a)	16/3.0T	240/5800	450/1300	rear	1445	162	4.84	12.98	9.8	● Uber hatch offers E92 M3 pace for half the price ● Needs an LSD badly; still no looker; struggles on a track	UNDER
(+\$4500)228i ★★★☆	Nov 15	\$59,900 (6m/8a)	14/2.0T	180/6500	350/1250	rear	1385	130	5.45	13.78	6.3	 Possibly the sweetest pick in BMW's line-up under \$75K Could do with a little aesthetic venom 	\$75K
228i cabrio ★★★☆☆		\$68,900 (6m/8a)	14/2.0T	180/6000	350/1250	rear	1555	116	6.0	-	6.6	Removable-roof doesn't cost a bomb An Audi S3 cabriolet is better looking and much faster	φ101.
(+\$2040) M235i	Dec 14	\$77,500 (6m/8a)	16/3.0T	240/6000	450/1300	rear	1455	165	5.00*	13.10*	7.6	● Spec the optional LSD and it's an absolute riot ● Struggles a bit without it; looks a bit plain	Ist.
(+\$1090) M235i cabrio		\$86,500 (6m/8a)	16/3.0T	240/6000	450/1300	rear	1620	148	5.0	-	7.9	Rorty six in a compact, good-looking summer package Huge weight and rigidity penalty over hardtop	TRAIN
330i ★★★☆		\$69,900 (6m) \$69,900 (8a)	14/2.0T	185/5200	350/1450	rear	1470	126	5.9	-	5.7	Could be all the car you ever need; fast, frugal and fun 330i should be a six-pot; not a whole lot else	Holden SS V R/I
330i Touring ★★★☆		\$73,300 (6m) \$73,300 (8a)	14/2.0T	185/5200	350/1450	rear	1540	120	6.0	-	6.1	The above with added practicality; wagon looks better Weight penalty costs it, but not a great deal	\$53,990 LS3 makes it the kir
340i		\$89,900 (6m/8a)	16/3.0T	240/5500	450/1380	rear	1510	158	5.1	-	6.8	Quick, comfortable, and a great prospect to own	2-2
	May 15	\$139,900 (6m/7dc)	16/3.0TT	317/7300	550/1800	rear	1520	208	4.3	-	8.8	Optional steering is awful; can struggle with power-down Looks sensational; brilliant chassis; massive performance Engine's lost some M magic; tricky to drive in the wet	
**** 428i	Dec 13	\$81,000 (6m/8a)	14/2.0T	180/6500	350/1250	rear	1470	122	5.9	-	6.4	Supreme balance; impressive torque; svelte thirst	
★★★☆ 428i Cabrio		\$98,000	14/2.0T	180/6500	350/1250	rear	1680	107	6.4	-	6.8	Dull cabin ambience; RIP the 3-Series coupe Capable and enjoyable drop-top; engine now sounds rorty Will be a top cally in Pendi and Toppel. Will be a top cally in Pendi and Toppel.	\$72,990 Awesome Aussie hot
	Dec 13	(6m/8a) \$108,040	16/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	rear	1525	130	5.1	-	7.4	Will be a top seller in Bondi and Toorak New name, same awesome all-round ability	310/
**** 435i Gran Coupe		(6m/8a) \$108,040	16/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	rear	1585	146	5.2*	-	7.6	 Has lost some character; where's the engine noise? Niche filler actually very accomplished and desirable 	6 6 = 1
★★★☆ 435i Cabrio		(6m/8a) \$126,140	16/3.0T	225/6000	400/1200	rear	1740	129	5.6	-	8.1	 A lot of money; coupe roofline compromises vision Arguably more fit for purpose than M4 Convertible 	AUDI S3 Sedan
★★★ ☆ M4	Jan 15	(6m/8a) \$149,900	16/3.0TT	317/7300	550/1800	rear	1497	181	4.82	12.83	11.3	 No roof upsets balance between power/handling Incredible grip and speed; simply amazing on a track 	\$63,400 Practical performar
****☆ M4 Convertible	Apr 15	(6m/7dc) \$161,900	16/3.0TT	317/7300	550/1800	rear	1753	212	4.46*	12.61*	8.8	 Tricky in the wet; doesn't look as good as the sedan Hugely fast; looks great; flash interior 	performat
		(6m/7dc)							50/			 250kg weight penalty over coupe hurts, well, everything 	
★★★☆☆ 535i	Jan 12	\$117,540 (8a)	16/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	rear	1690	133	5.94	14.14	7.9	Huge performance in a grandad-spec package	













Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

SEDANS **\$75K -\$150K**



HSV GTS \$94,490 World-class performance



BMW M3 \$139,990 A worthy M-car



M-B CLA45 AMG \$88,400 Looks fast. Goes faster



Minor refresh for Continental

Bentley's updated its Continental for 2016, but it's hardly the makeover the model needs. The front bar has been tweaked to welcome a smaller grille, while flying B side gills sit in the re-designed front guards. The only mechanical change is to the GT's W12 engine – it gains 11kW and 20Nm.

MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/I	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CO
M5 Pure ★★★★☆		\$185,000 (7dc)	V8/4.4TT	412/6800	680/1500	rear	1870	220	4.3	-	9.9	 De-specced M5 an absolute bargain No mechanical tweaks; Competition Package not included
M5 ★★★★☆	Feb 14	\$230,010 (7dc)	V8/4.4TT	423/6800	680/1500	rear	1870	226	4.95	12.87	18.5	olncredible performance yet also very comfortable of Too big, too complicated; tricky to drive at the limit
640i ★★★☆	Nov 15	\$177,900 (8a)	16/3.0T	235/6000	450/1300	rear	1660	142	5.3	-	7.8	Delicious engine; polished dynamics; looks great Lacks the kit and ultimate power of the 650i
640i Gran Coupe ★★★☆		\$184,900 (8a)	16/3.0T	235/6000	450/1300	rear	1750	134	5.4	-	6.2	OLooks so much classier than a 5-Series OIt'd want to for the amount it costs
640i Convertible ★★★☆	Aug 11	\$193,900 (8a)	16/3.0T	235/6000	450/1300	rear	1840	128	5.5	-	7.9	● Stylish land yacht; smooth drivetrain ● Engine struggles a little weight; compromised ride on 20s
650i ★★★☆		\$231,900 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	330/5500	650/2000	rear	1770	186	4.6	-	8.9	Properly fast; sounds brilliant; heaps of presence Not much space inside for something this big
650i Gran Coupe ★★★☆	Feb 13	\$238,900 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	330/5500	650/2000	rear	1865	177	4.6	-	8.9	Superb grand tourer; interior feels plush; best looking Six? You could buy an M5 and have change
650i Convertible ★★★☆		\$247,900 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	330/5500	650/2000	rear	1940	170	4.6	-	10.7	Looks great top up or down; stylish and fast drop-top Doesn't handle like a 911; not as sexy as an Aston
M6 ★★★☆	Dec 15	\$292,600 (7dc)	V8/4.4TT	441/7000	700/1500	rear	1850	222	4.94	12.82	18.5	OHyperdrive acceleration; phenomenal grip; phat looks Feels big and remote to drive; poorly packaged
M6 Gran Coupe	Jan 14	\$298,675 (7dc)	V8/4.4TT	412/7000	680/1500	rear	1875	200	4.71	12.52	17.1	Mstyling makes Gran Coupe look even better Massive money; built for autobahns not backroads
M6 Convertible		\$308,600 (7dc)	V8/4.4TT	412/7000	680/1500	rear	1980	208	4.3	-	10.3	Will blow your toupée clean off in seconds Way too heavy; scuttle shake with the roof down; the price
(+\$7060)750i ★★★☆☆		\$289,600 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	330/5500	650/1800	rear	1820	181	4.7	-	7.9	Mega engine; capable in the corners; crushing tech New engine has no more power and less torque
(+\$13,360) 750Li		\$312,600 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	330/5500	650/1800	rear	1865	177	4.7	-	8.0	● Enough room in the back to have a game of footy ● For those that want to be driven
Z4 sDrive 28i	Sep 12	\$89,900 (6m/8a)	14/2.0T	180/6500	350/1250	rear	1420	142	6.00	14.20	6.8	Solid turbo four and lighter drivetrain are a sweet combo Doesn't sound very sporty; weird looks
Z4 sDrive 35is	Aug 13	\$118,685 (8a)	16/3.0TT	250/5900	450(500)/ 1500	rear	1525	142	5.20	13.44	13.9	Uprated turbo six gives Z4 M-car pace Still not a threat to the Boxster S as the crispest drop-top
i8 ****	Feb 15	\$299,000 (6a)	13/1.5T(E)	266/5800	570/3700	all	1485	179	4.46	12.62	9.3	Proves green tech can be red hot; concept car looks Needs a more inspiring petrol engine
X4 xDrive35i ★★★☆☆	Sep 14	\$87,510 (8a)	16/3.0T	225/6400	400/1200	all	1815	124	5.5	-	8.3	 Impressive pace and agility for an SUV Still not sold on the whole coupe SUV concept
X5 xDrive50i ★★★☆☆	May 15	\$134,510 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	330/6000	650(700)/ 2000	all	2175	152	5.0	-	9.7	 Monster engine; luxurious interior; plenty of space Thirsty; dreadful steering; front-end styling
X5 M50d	Jan 14	\$147,510 (8a)	16/3.0TTTD	280/4400	740/2000	all	2190	129	5.3	-	6.7	 Triple-turbo diesel six's performance and economy Uninspiring soundtrack; still has terrible steering
X5 M ★★★★☆	Jan 16	\$185,510 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	423/6500	750/2200	all	2275	186	4.2	-	11.1	Hysterical performance; cheaper than all its rivals Still a big lump to throw around; arcade game steering
X6 xDrive35i		\$120,310 (8a)	L6/3.0T	225/6400	400/1200	all	2025	111	6.4	-	8.6	Great engine, luxurious interior Styling won't please everyone, less practical than an X5
X6 xDrive50i	May 15	\$151,210 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	330/6000	650(700)/ 2000	all	2170	152	4.8	-	9.7	 Almost as quick as the full house X6M for \$30K less Still got to ask why you'd pay \$10K more than an X5 for less
X6 M50d ★★★		\$157,510 (8a)	16/3.0TTTD	280/4400	740/2000	all	2185	128	5.2	-	6.6	Diesel stonk and efficiency wrapped in a unique shell Acceleration feels more pragmatic than sporty
X6 M ★★★★☆	Aug 15	\$194,310 (8a)	V8/4.4TT	423/6500	750/2200	all	2265	186	4.2	-	11.1	Frighteningly fast; defies the laws of physics in corners \$9K more than X5M, then there's rear passenger chiro bills
TERHAM	Ca	terhan										www.caterhamcars.com.au
Seven 275 ★★★☆☆		\$69,300 (5m)	14/1.6	100/6100	160/4100	rear	590	170	TBC	-	TBC	 Entry-level Caterham great fun to steer An emotional purchase – for the cash, there's quicker
	Nov 14	\$86,650 (5m)	14/2.0	127/7200	177/6000	rear	625	206	5.0	-	7.7	Delivers thrills with a few comforts All the foibles associated with Pommy track cars
	Jan 16	\$108,990 (6m)	14/2.0	177/8500	206/6300	rear	675	262	3.4	-	7.7	Mad race-spec engine; lightweight handling; engagement Madly compromised; you'll have to love it to live with it

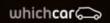


FORD MONDEO ECOBOOST

THE FORD Mondeo has always been a satisfying steer, but it's also been largely ignored by Aussie buyers, thumped by the likes of the Mazda 6 and Toyota Camry. Thankfully, the former remains true, with this top-spec Titanium possessing a lovely ride, sweet steering and enjoyable handling for what is essentially a sensible mid-size hatch. The 2.0-litre Ecoboost four is punchy, though it occasionally struggles both with traction and shifting the Mondeo's 1690kg bulk. Looks good, too, even three years after the car's US launch. As ever, then, the Mondeo is the enthusiasts' choice in this sector, but are there any enthusiasts in this sector? -SN

SPECS 2.0L INLINE-FOUR, 177KW/345NM, 8.2L/100KM **PRICE** \$44,290





MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
	Ch	rysler										www.chrysler.com.au
300 SRT8 Core		\$59,000 (8a)	V8/6.4	350/6150	637/4250	rear	1946	180	-		13.0	• Incredible pace for the money; street cred
* * * * ☆ 300 SRT8	Jan 16	\$69,000 (8a)	V8/6.4	350/6150	637/4250	rear	1965	178	-		-	Interior feels a litle cheap in places; no adaptive dampers Great value; loaded with kit; rides well; sounds brilliant
***	Cit	troën										No ballerina in the bends; fightening thirst WWW.citroen.com.au
	Oct 15	\$33,990 (6m)	14/1.6T	121/6000	240/1400	front	1140	106	7.51	15.58	5.6	Trendy styling; playful and pliant chassis
★★★☆☆ DS3 DSport Cabriolet	Jul 15	\$36,590 (6m)	14/1.6T	121/6000	240/1400	front	1165	104	7.5	-	5.6	 In dire need of a proper engine to make the most of it Cute as a button; trendier than a hipster's iPhone Would you really want to be seen driving it?
4	Fe	rrari										www.ferrari.com.aı
California T	Nov 15	\$409,888 (7dc)	V8/3.8TT	412/7500	755/4750	rear	1730	238	3.6	-	10.5	Massive turbocharged grunt; looks much better Bit soft around the edges; inevitable poseur image
488 GTB	Aug 15	\$469,988 (7dc)	V8/3.9TT	492/8000	760/3000	rear	1475	334	3.0	-	11.4	Ridiculously fast and good looking It's a different machine, and soul, to the 458
FF	Dec 13	\$624,646 (7dc)	V12/6.3	486/8000	683/6000	all	1880	258	3.7	-	15.4	A Ferrari with punishing performance and practicality
★★★★ F12 Berlinetta	Apr 14	\$690,745 (7dc)	V12/6.3	545/8250	690/6000	rear	1525	357	3.1	-	15.0	Not exactly pretty; scary fuel bills; heavyAmazing engine, chassis and technology
****												Not for inexperienced hands
Gord	Fo	rd										www.ford.com.au
Fiesta ST ★★★★	Oct 15	\$25,990 (6m)	14/1.6T	134(147)/ 5700	240(290)/ 1600	front	1197	112	6.97	14.93	10.5	New Blue Oval hero; engine and handling top-notch Firm ride; interior is a little low-rent
Focus ST	Aug 15	\$38,290 (6m)	14/2.0T	184/5500	360/2000	front	1362	135	6.4	14.7	9.5	Cracking engine; superbly adjustable handling; price Interior ergonomics; fake engine note; turning circle
Falcon XR6 ute		\$30,440 (6m) \$32,640 (6a)	16/4.0	195/6000	391/3250	rear	1783*	109	-	-	8.7*	Leaf-sprung rear end proves its worth carrying loads but handicaps it in the corners
Falcon XR6	Oct 15	\$36,090 (6m) \$38,290 (6a)	16/4.0	195/6000	391/3250	rear	1748*	112	6.66	14.78	12.4*	Lovely handling balance and ride; great steering Interior looking very dated; quality concerns
Falcon G6E Ecoboost		\$40,110 (6a)	14/2.0T	179/5500	353/2000	rear	1688*	* 106	-	-	8.7	EcoBoost engine a revelation and helps handling, too
★★★☆ Falcon XR6 Turbo ute	Jul 15	\$38,110 (6m) \$40,310 (6a)	16/4.0T	270/5250	533/2000	rear	1832*	147	5.11*	13.39*	13.7*	GGE is no sports car, put the engine in an XR6, stat! Brilliant turbo six; entertaining handling; tradie respect Can be a real handful in the wet; not exactly sophisticated
Falcon XR6 Turbo	Oct 15	\$43,490 (6m) \$45,690 (6a)	16/4.0T	270/5250	533/2000	rear	1793*	151	5.39	13.64	13.1	Huge performance; cheaper than ever before
Falcon G6E Turbo	Apr 15	\$47,050 (6a)	16/4.0T	270/5250	533/2000	rear	1804*	* 149	-	-	11.7**	Vague front-end; feeling quite old Monster performance in a refined package
★★★☆☆ XR8	Nov 15	\$53,490 (6m)	V8/5.0S	335/5750	570/2200	rear	1858*	180	4.87*	12.86*	17.0*	 Interior too similar to normal Falcon Massive performance for your dollar; V8 soundtrack
****		\$54,690 (6a)										Ride is too firm; handling far from sophisticated
60	Ho	olden										www.holden.com.aı
Barina RS ★★☆☆	Jan 14	\$21,390 (6m) \$23,590 (6a)	14/1.4T	103/4900	200/1850	front	1249	82	-	-	6.5	 Super cheap; reasonable levels of grip Doesn't deserve an 'RS' badge; barely a performance car
Cruze SRi ★★★☆☆	Jul 14	\$23,140 (6m) \$25,340 (6a)	14/1.6T	132/5500	230/2200	front	1450	91	8.81	16.23	10.6	Grippy, agile chassis; well-tuned for local roads Performance way off the pace of rivals
Astra GTC Sport	Oct 15	\$29,990 (6m)	14/1.6T	147/5500	280/1650	front	1498	98	7.75	15.51	6.9	Mid-corner grip; it's decent value Ordinary interior; weight blunts performance
Astra VXR	Oct 15	\$39,990 (6m)	14/2.0T	206/5300	400/2400	front	1534	130	6.58	14.83	6.9	Searing pace from proper diff; muscly inline four; grip Not as 'playful' as some rivals; mid-corner steering kickback
Insignia VXR		\$51,990 (6a)	V6/2.8T	239/5290	435/5250	all	1809	128	6.3	-	10.9	Price cut means relaunched Insignia offers value for money
SV6 ute		\$33,990 (6m)	V6/3.6	210/6400	350/2900	rear	1680	125	-	-	9.0	She's a heavy beast; auto limits torque output OVF updates give SV6 real performance; that price!
***** SV6		\$36,190 (6a) \$37,290 (6m)	V6/3.6	210/6400	350/2900	rear	1688	124	-	-	9.0	Doesn't have the street cred of the V8 Onow much more refined; quality interior
★★★☆☆ SV6 Sportwagon		\$39,490 (6a) \$41,490 (6a)	V6/3.6	210/6400	350/2900	rear	1778	118	-	-	9.3	 Doesn't have the grunt of eight cylinders, notchy 'box A great family bus; economical, roomy and a great drive
**** SS ute		\$40,990 (6m)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1726	176	-	-	12.8	Not many people see it that way Cheaper than ever; the new drift king
****		\$43,190 (6a) \$44,490 (6m)	V8/62		570/4400		1749		_	_	12.6	Six-speed gearbox still not the slickest unit around A world-class sports sedan; looks great in the right colour
****		\$46,690 (6a) \$48,690 (6a)	V8/62		570/4400		1855			_	12.9	Bogan tag will still be hard to shake; weak brakes in standard tri Same as above with room for the dog
SS Sportwagon												VE rear-end styling clashes with VF front
SS V ute ★★★☆☆		\$45,490 (6m) \$46,690 (6a)	V8/62		570/4400		1744				12.8	Few better ways to carry your tools Payload means it can't actually carry that many tools
SS V ★★★☆		\$47,990 (6m) \$50,190 (6a)	V8/62		570/4400		1765		-	_	12.6	Improved in every area, this is the best SS yet Buy one while you can, you'll miss it when it's gone
SS V Sportwagon ★★★☆		\$52,190 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1867	163	-	-	12.9	Family hauler makes even more sense than VF sedan Getting up there in the kilo stakes; she's 100kg heavier

TOP 3

SEDANS OVER \$150K



M-B C63 AMG S \$154,900 The new benchmark



M-B E63 AMG S \$250,930 Feels nuclear powered



BMW M5 Pure \$185,000 Bargain bruiser

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

COUPES UNDER **\$75K**



BRZ/86 From \$29,990 Gen-Y drift legend



Nissan 370Z \$56,930 Ageing, but still fun



Lotus Elise \$74,990 Light, engaging, pure



Peugeot RCZ meets its maker PEUGEOT has ceased

PEUGEOT has ceased selling its RCZ in Australia. Maxime Picat, Peugeot's CEO, confirmed that after six years of production, two models, and a riveting R version that was introduced in the later stages of its life, the RCZ won't be replaced. Not only was the car attractive, it proved a bloody good steer, and in spite of its crappy ergonomics we're sad to see it go. Au revoir.

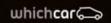
o quick cars	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
SS V Redline ute ★★★☆		\$50,490 (6m) \$52,690 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1755	173	-	-	12.8	A true track star for under \$50K!Does anyone actually take a ute on a track?
SS V Redline	Dec 15	\$53,990 (6m) \$56,190 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1793	170	-	-	12.6	 A Clubsport in Holden clothing Our best ever performance Commodore is also the last
SS V Redline Sportwagon ★★★☆		\$58,190 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1867	163	-	-	13.1	● Who doesn't love a performance wagon? ● Now auto-only; possibly the most pointless Redline
Calais V V8 ★★★☆		\$55,490 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1805	168	-	-	12.9	Few better ways to travel interstate on Aussie roads Not as sharp as the SS, but that's kinda the point
Calais V V8 Sportwagon ★★★★☆		\$57,490 (6a)	V8/62	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1867	163	-	-	12.9	A V8 sports-luxury wagon? Sounds about perfect Quite heavy and therefore thirsty
Caprice V-Series ★★★☆		\$60,490 (6a)	V8/6.2	304/6000	570/4400	rear	1849	164	-	-	12.9	■ Superb ride; simply enormous inside; great to drive ■ Only premium cab drivers will know how good it is
HÐSV	HS	SV										www.hsv.com.au
Maloo R8 ★★★☆☆		\$69,990(6m) \$72,490 (6a)	V8/62	340/6000	570/4600	rear	1823	178	-	-	12.6	R8 receives all of the sedan's electronic goodies Don't drive an LSA, you'll wish you'd bought that one

HOSV	HS	V										www.hsv.com.au
Maloo R8 ★★★☆☆		\$69,990(6m) \$72,490 (6a)	V8/62	340/6000	570/4600	rear	1823	178	-	-	12.6	R8 receives all of the sedan's electronic goodies Don't drive an LSA, you'll wish you'd bought that one
Maloo R8 LSA ★★★★☆		\$76,990 (6m) \$79,490 (6a)	V8/6.2	400/6150	671/4200	rear	1887	212	-	-	15.8*	■Maloo GTS performance for \$10K cheaper■ Bulky, ugly tonneau ruins the ute's styling
Clubsport R8 ★★★★☆		\$73,290(6m) \$75,790 (6a)	V8/6.2	340/6000	570/4600	rear	1764	184	-	-	12.6	 Still a brilliant combination of grunt and grip LSA engine is a difficult carrot to ignore
Clubsport R8 LSA ★★★★☆	Dec 16	\$80,990 (6m) \$83,490 (6a)	V8/6.2	400/6150	671/4200	rear	1907	209	4.59*	12.67*	15.0*	 Clubsport chassis finally gets the grunt it deserves Massively thirsty; MRC should be optional
Clubsport R8 Tourer LSA ★★★☆	Jan 16	\$85,990 (6a)	V8/6.2S	400/6150	671/4200	rear	1974	203	4.54*	12.67*	15.0*	Awesome family hauler; coolest Aussie car there is?It'll make the kids and dogs sick with this much grunt
Senator Signature ★★★★☆		\$92,990 (6m/6a)	V8/6.2S	400/6150	671/4200	rear	1902	210	-	-	15.0*	● A HSV for the introvert; magnetic dampers are fab ● Not much, really, though you might as well buy the GTS
Grange ★★★☆		\$86,990 (6a)	V8/6.2	340/6100	570/4650	rear	1844	184	-	-	12.9*	oit's \$6K lass than Senator; full-spec 340kW V8 ◆ Appealing to an incredibly small market; no LSA under its bonnet
GTS ★★★★		\$95,590 (6m) \$98,490 (6a)	V8/6.2S	430/6150	740/3850	rear	1903	226	4.55*	12.59*	18.2*	 The best Aussie car ever. A brilliant achievement Doesn't feel as fast as it should be; scary fuel thirst
And the Control of												

9	Hy	undai										www.hyundai.com.ai
i30 SR ★★★☆☆	Nov 14	\$25,590 (6m) \$27,890 (6a)	14/2.0	129/6500	209/4700	front	1258	102	8.50	16.37	8.2	 A fine attempt at a warm hatch; old-school fun to drive Scary in the wet; three-mode steering a gimmick
Veloster ★★☆☆☆	Sep 12	\$24,490 (6m) \$26,990 (6dc)	14/1.6	103/6300	166/4850	front	1180	87	9.5	16.8	6.4	 Quirky four-door hatch/coupe looks the business Dynamics and drivetrain a long way from class-leading
Veloster SR Turbo ★★★☆☆	Oct 15	\$29,990 (6m) \$32,490 (7dc)	14/1.6T	150/6000	265/1750	front	1290	116	7.81	15.50	7.1	Punchy engine gives Veloster the go to match its showInert handling; struggles for traction
Genesis ★★☆☆		\$60,000 (8a)	V6/3.8	232/6000	397/5000	rear	1945	119	6.5	14.8	11.2	Comfortable, quiet, refined; good value; entertaining handlingStill can't shake its Hyundai-ness

*****		\$52,490 (7uc)										inert nandling; struggles for traction
Genesis ★★★☆☆		\$60,000 (8a)	V6/3.8	232/6000	397/5000	rear	1945	119	6.5	14.8	11.2	○Comfortable, quiet, refined; good value; entertaining handling ○Still can't shake its Hyundai-ness
S	Ini	finiti										www.infiniticars.com.au
Q50 Hybrid S ★★☆☆		\$67,900 (7a)	V6/35E	268/6500	546/1470	rear	1775	151	5.1	-	6.8	● Looks sharp; seriously quick for the cash ● Confused interior; powertrain calibration needs work
Q50 Hybrid S Premium ★★★☆☆		\$73,400 (7a)	V6/3.5E	268/6500	546/1470	all	1853	145	5.3	-	7.2	Performance is more surprising than Steve Bradbury's Yet it's slower than the rear-driver to 100km/h
Q60 S Premium ★★★☆☆	Mar 13	\$69,900 (7a)	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	rear	1692	139	6.31	14.34	12.8	●Left-field coupe option drives reasonably well ●Trouble is, a 370Z is \$14K cheaper and sharper to boot
Q60 S Premium Convertible ★★☆☆☆		\$77,400 (7a)	V6/3.7	236/7000	360/5200	rear	1866	125	6.4	-	11.4	Styling turns heads; V6 makes a nice noise Heavy, creaky and uninspiring to drive
Q70 S Premium ★★★☆☆		\$78,900 (7a)	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	rear	1702	138	6.2	-	10.2	 Build quality; unique styling; value proposition Feels old (because it is); dynamically unresolved
Q70 Hybrid Premium ★★★☆☆	Aug 12	\$82,900 (7a)	V6/3.5E	268/6800	520/5000	rear	1785	150	5.5	-	6.9	 Strong petrol-electric performance and economy Steering feels artificial; lacks cred at the golf club
OX70 S Premium ★★★☆☆		\$104,400 (7a)	V8/5.0	297/6500	500/4400	all	1992	149	5.8	-	13.1	Cracking V8 means this SUV seriously shifts Love-or-hate styling; drinks like an alcoholic sailor
Ser.	Tar	duar										www.iaguar.gom au

and the same	Jaş	guar										www.jaguar.com.au
XE Portfolio ★★★☆		\$70,400 (8a)	14/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	rear	1530	116	6.8	-	7.5	British 3 Series rival nails the fundamentals Interior quality slightly behind ze Germans
XE S ★★★★☆		\$104,200 (8a)	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/4500	rear	1665	150	5.1	-	8.1	Snarling V6 wrapped in a competent sedan package Compromised boot space
XF 3.0 R-Sport ★★★☆☆		\$99,940 (8a)	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	rear	1770	141	5.6	-	9.3	Interesting British alternative to a BMW 335i XF has been around a while now; not particularly quick
XF S Diesel ★★★☆☆	Jul 10	\$112,900 (8a)	V6/3.0TD	202/4000	600/2000	rear	1820	111	6.75	14.64	10.5	 Class-leading diesel refinement and driveability Steering too light in hard cornering on tight roads
XFR ★★★☆☆	Jan 10	\$188,685 (8a)	V8/5.0S	375/6500	625/2500	rear	1891	198	5.05	12.99	12.5	 Effortlessly rapid performance and dynamics Sensitive steering too light and reactive on difficult roads
XFR-S ★★★☆☆	Feb 14	\$221,685 (8a)	V8/5.0S	404/6500	680/2500	rear	1987	203	4.95	12.90	11.6	 Thundering performance; excellent ride Poor traction; little front-end communication; not cheap
XJ Supersport LWB ★★★☆		\$297,140 (8a)	V8/5.0S	375/6500	625/2500	rear	1880	199	4.9	-	11.6	The barge from Blighty astounds with its ability Try parking it anywhere; some will find the ride firm



MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
	Sep 14	\$297,140 (8a)	V8/5.0S	404/6500	680/2500	rear	_	216	4.6	-	11.6	Superb blown V8; handling poise; looks gorgeous Doesn't feel as solid as German rivals; interior a bit old
F-Type Coupe		\$119,080(6m) \$124,080 (8a)	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	rear	1577*	159	5.3	-	8.8	Sweet blown V6; nimble and fun; a drug for the eyeballs No LSD; not a fast car; steering almost too sharp
F-Type S Coupe ★★★☆	Dec 14	\$151,380 (6m) \$156,380 (8a)	V6/3.0S	280/6500	460/3500	rear	1594*	176	4.9	-	9.1	Looks good, goes hard: the F-Type Coupe sweet spot Like the droptop, it's how much more than the base?
F-Type S Coupe AWD ★★★★☆	Nov 15	\$172,080 (8a)	V6/3.0S	280/6500	460/3500	all	1674	167	5.1	-	8.9	Good chassis harnessed by superb grip Engine struggles a little with the extra weight
F-Type V8 R Coupe	Jan 15	\$226,580 (8a)	V8/5.0S	404/6500	680/2500	rear	1665	243	3.99	11.99	15.0	Ocomically, stupidly fast; the looks, the noise – the skids A lot of engine for the rear-drive F-Type. If you're a sook
F-Type V8 R Coupe AWD ★★★★☆	Sep 15	\$242,280 (8a)	V8/5.0S	404/6500	680/2500	all	1730	234	4.1	-	11.3	Gives it the traction to go with its incredible power Will it retain the rear driver's fun factor?
F-Type ★★★☆		\$137,780 (6m) \$142,780 (8a)	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	rear	1597*	156	5.3	-	9.0	 Traffic-stopping looks; sweet blown V6; Jag badge No LSD; no luggage space (really, none)
F-Type S ★★★☆	Apr 15	\$175,080 (8a)	V6/3.0S	280/6500	460/3500	rear	1614	173	4.98	13.16	9.1	Sweetest of the bunch; a lovely thing to drive sis it \$30K better than the base V6 (then there's options!)?
F-Type V8 R ★★★☆		\$245,280 (8a)	V8/5.0S	404/6500	680/2500	rear	1665	242	4.2	-	10.7	Oh-my-god fast; Armageddon-spec exhaust note ● Severe traction issues; lacks Coupe's solid feel
F-Type V8 R AWD	Sep 15	\$260,980 (8a)	V8/5.0S	404/6500	680/2500	all	1745	232	4.1	-	11.3	●So much cooler than a Carrera cabriolet ●\$260K is a huge amount of cash
Jeep	Je	ep										www.jeep.com.au
Grand Cherokee SRT8 ★★★☆☆		\$84,000 (8a)	V8/6.4	344/6250	624/4100	all	2289	150	4.9	-	14.0	Stonking engine; finally gets the eight-speed auto Can't defy physics; unholy thirst for unleaded
KIA	Ki	a										www.kia.com.au
ProCeed GT ★★★☆	Nov 14	\$29,990 (6m)	14/1.6T	150/6000	265/1750	front	1373	109	7.47	15.37	10.1	 Cracking first attempt at a sporting hatch Engine needs more fire; chassis could use more agility
ProCeed GT-Tech	May 14	\$34,490 (6m)	14/1.6T	150/6000	265/1750	front	1373	109	7.7	-	7.7	Extra equipment improves the value proposition At the price, not a whole lot; some don't like the looks
Koup Turbo ★★★☆☆	Dec 13	\$27,990 (6m) \$30,190 (6a)	14/1.6T	150/6000	265/1750	front	1364	110	-	-	7.7	 Stylish, much-improved entry-level coupe Deserves better tyres; no 86-beater
À	La	mborg	nini									www.lamborghini.com.au
Huracán LP610-4 ★★★★	Oct 15	\$428,000 (7dc)	V10/52	449/8250	560/6500	all	1512	300	3.2	-	12.5	 Mind-blowingly fast; sharp handling; brilliant gearbox Rivals are all faster; could be more playful
Aventador LP700-4 ★★★★☆	Mar 15	\$761,500 (7s)	V12/6.5	515/8250	690/5500	all	1575	327	2.9	-	16.0	Otherworldy styling and performance; true rock star car Intimidating size; harsh ride quality; outdated gearbox
Aventador LP700-4 Pirelli		\$788,200 (7s)	V12/6.5	515/8250	690/5500	all	1575	327	2.9	-	16.0	One-off style pack sets your Aventador apart t's really just a sticker pack; no mechanical upgrades
ventador LP700-4 Roadster ★★★☆	Apr 13	\$795,000 (7s)	V12/6.5	515/8250	690/5500	all	1625	317	3.0	-	16.0	Even crazier styling than coupe with no less performance We've got next to no chance of driving one locally
Aventador LP750-4 SV ★★★★☆	Aug 15	\$882,650 (7s)	V12/6.5	552/8400	690/5500	all	1525	362	2.8	-	16.0	New steering and chassis make SV much more driveable Few places to unleash such performance
Aventador LP750-4 Superveloce roadster ★★★☆	Aug 15	\$916,150 (7s)	V12/6.5	552/8400	690/5500	all	1575	350	2.9	-	16.0	● Hear one of the world's most powerful V12s first hand ● It's almost a million bucks, before options
	Le	xus										www.lexus.com.au
IS350 F Sport	Dec 14	\$69,510 (8a)	V6/35	233/6400	378/4800	rear	1685	138	6.10	14.10	9.7	Great value; enjoyable dynamics; responsive V6 Nannying ESP; engine tech needs an update
RC350 F Sport	Nov 15	\$73,510 (8a)	V6/35	233/6000	378/4800	rear	1680	139	6.08	14.12	9.4	Aggro looking coupe ups Lexus's mojo; sweet dynamics Found wanting the V8-powered F's potency
	Apr 15	\$133,110 (8a)	V8/5.0	351/7100	530/4800	rear	1860	189	4.5	-	10.9	Cheaper than German rivals, naturally aspirated V8 It makes a Nissan GT-R look svelte
GS350 F Sport		\$95,510 (6a)	V6/35	233/6000	378/4800	rear	1740	134	6.0	-	9.7	Surprisingly capable chassis takes the Euros on Hyper-responsive steering takes some getting used to
LS600h F Sport		\$210,110 (cvt)	V8/5.0E	327/6400	520/4000	all	2340	140	5.7	13.8	8.6	Incredible refinement from the ultimate orient express Weighs as much as a Tokyo skyscraper; no soul
	Lo	tus										www.lotuscars.com.au
Elise		\$74,990 (6m)	14/1.6	100/6800	160/4400	rear	876	114	6.5	-	6.1	Purest, cheapest Elise still stands out in a crowd One of those cars that would be amazing if it cost \$45K
Elise S		\$84,990 (6m)	14/1.8S	162/6800	250/4600	rear	880	185	4.6	-	7.5	A terrific drive made even better by supercharging Not easy to get in or out of; not a daily driver
Elise 220 Cup		\$119,990 (6m)	14/1.8S	162/6800	250/4600	rear	943	171	4.6	-	7.5	An Elise with serious downforce, what's not to like? …it'll only make sense at Phillip Island
Exige S	Oct 13	\$132,990 (6m) \$137,990 (6a)	V6/35S	258/7000	400/4500	rear	1176	219	4.0	-	10.1	Cheapest ticket for a supercar power-to-weight ratio Bigger, but still cramped and no daily driver
Exige S Roadster		\$132,990 (6m) \$137,990 (6a)	V6/35S	258/7000	400/4500	rear	1166	221	4.0	-	10.1	Pop-top barely compromises the Exige's ferocity Still a hardcore proposition for everyday use
****		\$180,660 (6m)	V6/3.5S	258/7000	400/4500	roar	1442	170	4.4		9.7	Looks great; snarly engine; sublime steering

COUPES **\$75K -\$150K**



Porsche Cayman S \$139,400 Sublime in almost

every way



LotusExige S \$132,990 Raucous but rewarding



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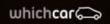


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	MODEL	ТЕЅТЕО	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
	₩	M	aserati										www.maserati.com.au
П	(+\$4000) Ghibli		\$139,900 (8a)	V6/3.0TT	243/5000	500/1750	rear	1810	134	5.6	-	9.6	Maserati's 5-Series fighter looks the business Not sure how it drives, we still haven't driven it!
	Ghibli S		\$169,900 (8a)	V6/3.0TT	301/5500	550/1750	rear	1810	166	5.0	-	10.4	High-tune twin-turbo V6 gives the Ghibli real punch At this price, what do you compare it against?
(±	\$12,300) Quattroporte Diesel		\$210,100 (8a)	V6/3.0TD	202/4000	600/2000	rear	1945	104	6.4	-	6.2	Turbo diesel six punches hard and sips little Limo platform's penalised with more weight
	Quattroporte		\$215,000 (8a)	V6/3.0TT	243/4750	500/4500	rear	1900	128	5.6	-	9.1	A quick, classy, and cheap alternative to a Panamera Deserves more power
	Quattroporte S		\$240,000 (8a)	V6/3.0TT	301/5500	550/1750	rear	1900	158	5.1	-	9.6	New twin-turbo V6 matches old V8 for grunt Feels its size; V8 is a more appealling proposition
(+\$11,200) Quattroporte GTS		\$331,000 (8a)	V8/3.8TT	390/6800	650(710)/ 2000	rear	1951	200	4.7	12.8	10.7	New turbo V8 has mega mumbo; classy interior Except for the Chrysler bits; ride issues; huge money
	GranTurismo MC Sportline ★★★☆☆		\$295,000 (6a) \$319,000 (6s)	V8/4.7	338/7000	520/4750	rear	1880	187	4.7	-	15.5	 Drop-dead gorgeous coupe finally gets more grunt. Still more of a grand tourer than proper sportscar
	GranCabrio ★★★☆☆	Mar 11	\$328,000 (6a)	V8/4.7	313/7000	490/4750	rear	1980	163	5.4	-	14.5	Exclusivity; glorious 4.7-litre V8 soundtrack; manic grip Scruttle shake, lack of top-up headroom and hootspace
	GranCabrio Sport		\$338,000 (6a)	V8/4.7	338/7000	520/4750	rear	1980	171	5.0	-	14.5	Quicker shifting 'box and extra 10Nm ups the aggression Still more of a grand tourer than a proper sportscar
	GranCabrio Sport MC		\$355,000 (6s)	V8/4.7	338/7000	520/4750	rear	1973	171	4.9	-	14.9	• 'MC' shifts the trans rearward and cuts shift times again • Will any Cabrio drivers feel the difference?
	GranTurismo MC Stradale ★★★☆☆		\$345,000 (6s)	V8/4.7	338/7000	520/4750	rear	1800	199	4.5	-	14.4	Stiffer, faster Stradale is Maserati's 300km/h Trident There are some serious rivals at this price point
	Θ	M	azda										www.mazda.com.au
	3 SP25	Nov 14	\$25,190 (6m) \$27,190 (6a)	14/25	138/5700	250/3250	front	1308	105	8.20	15.87	8.1	Tremendous value; entertaining handling For what it's meant to do, very little really
	3 XD	Dec 14	\$39,290 (6m) \$41,290 (6a)	14/2.2TD	129/4500	420/2000	front	1398	92	7.7	-	5.0	Loaded with every feature under the sun; grunty engine No MPS replacement; Golf GTI money
	MX-5 ★★★☆	Nov 15	\$31,990 (6m/6a)	14/1.5	96/7000	150/4800	rear	1009	95	-	-	5.0	Superb dynamics; lightness; keen engine
	MX-5 GT ★★★★☆		\$37,990 (6m/6a)	14/1.5	96/7000	150/4800	rear	1009	95	-	-	5.0	More technology and gearfor Mazda's thrilling mite Save the coin for the 2.0-litre
	McLaren	M	cLaren										www.cars.mclaren.com
	570S	Jan 16	\$408,000 (7dc)	V8/3.8TT	419/7500	600/5000	rear	1344	312	3.2	-	10.8	♦ Insane performance; added practicality; involving dynamics ♦ Doesn't ride as well as the 650S; hefty options pricing
	650S	Jun 14	\$464,000 (7dc)	V8/3.8TT	478/7250	678/6000	rear	1428	335	3.0	10.5	11.7	olncredible performance – 0-200km/h in 8.4sec! We'll let you know when we drive it
		Jun 14	\$511,000 (7dc)	V8/3.8TT	478/7250	678/6000	rear	1468	326	3.0	10.5	11.7	Carbon cell means no less rigidity or performance Will it be able to knock off Maranello's finest?
	675 LT		\$616,250 (7dc)	V8/3.8TT	497/7250	700/6000	rear	1328	360	2.9	-	-	Woking's answer to the Ferrari 458 Speciale That car has just been superseded by an even faster model
	(1)	M	ercedes	s-Be	nz							W	ww.mercedes-benz.com.au
	A250 Sport	Mar 14	\$51,000 (7dc)	14/2.0T	155/5500	350/1200	front	1370	113	7.48	15.44	6.6	Great chassis; excellent steering; classy looks Can't turn ESP off; gearbox could be more responsive
		Mar 15	\$75,800 (7dc)	14/2.0T	265/6000	450/2250	all	1480	179	4.60	12.85	12.8	First four-cylinder AMG does the brand proud
	CLA 250 Sport	Sep 14	\$64,900 (7dc)	14/2.0T	155/5500	350/1200	all	1465	106	6.6	-	6.6	All-wheel drive justifies \$15K premium over A250 hatch Rivals at this price point are much faster
	CLA 250 Sport S/brake		\$66,400 (7dc)	14/2.0T	155/5500	350/1200	all	1490	104	6.8	-	6.9	Looks, practicality and spritely performance rolled into one Not as agile as its hatch twin
	CLA45 AMG	Mar 14	\$88,400 (7dc)	14/2.0T	265/6000	450/2250	all	1510	176	4.6	-	7.1	Adding a boot just adds to the appeal; rides a little softer
	CLA45 AMG S/brake	Aug 15	\$89,510 (7dc)	14/2.0T	265/6000	450/2250	all	1540	172	4.7	-	7.2	Hardcore performance wrapped in compact utility It's the heaviest MFA-based AMG yet
		Oct 15	\$154,510 (7a)	V8/4.0TT	375/6250	700/1750	rear	1655	227	4.0	-	8.6	 Amazing engine; brilliant chassis; new-found comfort Looks quite subtle; occasional transmission stumble
	C63 AMG S Estate	Jan 16	\$157,010 (7a)	V8/4.0TT	375/6250	700/1750	rear	1725	217	4.0	-	8.7	The family man's performance solution Practicality comes at a cost, she's getting heavy
		Feb 14	\$250,540 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	800/1750	rear	1795	240	4.91	12.72	10.3	Breathtakingly fast; rides and handles beautifully Doesn't have the response or the charm of the old atmo 6.2
	(+\$1890) CLS500 S/brake ★★★★☆	Aug 15	\$181,400 (9a)	V8/4.7TT	300/5750	600/1600	rear	1880	160	4.9	-	8.9	Lovely blend of style, engine performance and comfort Cabin feels dated by much smarter fit-out in C-Class
	(±\$1890) CLS500 ★★★★☆		\$171,400 (9a)	V8/4.7TT	300/5750	600/1600	rear	1815	165	4.9	-	8.9	Awesome engine; greater comfort than AMG version Not everyone loves the looks; E-Class more practical
	(+\$1890) CLS63 AMG S ★★★★☆		\$251,400 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	800/1750	rear	1795	239	4.1	-	10.0	• 'S' designation adds 20kW; not that it needed it • It's better looking, but rivals still look better
	\$500 ****	Feb 14	\$286,210 (7a)	V8/4.7TT	335/5250	700/1800	rear	1920	174	4.8	-	9.2	The world's best limousine; incredible tech and interior You'll probably enjoy it more from the back seat
	S500 L		\$311,510 (7a)	V8///7TT	335/5250	700/1800	roar	1940	173	4.8	_	9.2	• Even more rear seat room for ultimate passenger comfort

TOP 3

COUPES **OVER** 150K



sche 911 GT3 3,200 ood as it gets



sche 911 Turbo 56,500 Jally flawless



san.GT-R 2,000 tally ignores physics

тор з

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W X5M 5,900 vyweight athlete



inge Rover oort SVR **24,110** '8 hot-hatch on stilts



rcedes-AMG E63S \$189,900 nily-friendly speed

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Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

SUPER CARS



Ferrari 488 GTB \$550,000 Simply sensational



Ferrari F12 \$690,745 A GT masterpiece



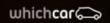
McLaren 675LT \$616,250 Woking's best yet



SL cops the Mille Miglia treatment

IT'S been 60 years since Stuttgart first won the Mille Miglia's production class with its 300 SL, and now it has released a "Mille Miglia 417" pack in tribute – 417 is the number of the original racer. With it you get matte paint, red styling on the spoilers, brakes, rims, interior, and special "Mille Miglia 417" badges thrown on an SL400 or SL500. It'll cost you a cool \$15,900, though.

cars	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
S63 AMG		\$386,910 (7a)	V8/5.5TT		900/2250	_	_	218	4.4	-	10.2	The best tool for crushing autobahns There are no autobahns in Australia
S63 AMG L		\$399,510 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	900/2250	rear	2095	205	4.5	-	10.3	The best tool for crushing autobahns from the back seat
	Feb 15	\$417,110 (7a)	V12/6.0TT	390/5300	830/1900	rear	2110	185	4.6	-	11.3	Not very relaxing doing 250km/h in the back seat Big daddy S-class is matched with silken V12
★★★★ S600 Maybach		\$448,610 (7a)	VI2/6.0TT	390/5500	830/1900	rear	2408	162	5.0	-	11.7	There's not much wrong with the S500 V8 Exclusivity and luxury at a much lower price than previous
★★★★☆ S65 AMG L	-	\$489,610 (7a)	VI2/6.0TT	463/5400	1000/2300	rear	2175	213	4.3	-	11.9	Maybach difference wasn't what it once was V12 Bi-Turbo badge means you're king of the hill
★★★☆ S500 Coupe	-	\$318,610 (7a)	V8/4.7TT	335/5500	700/1800	rear	1955	171	4.6	-	8.6	You could buy a Maybach for the money Limousine excellence in a svelte coupe bodyshell
★★★★ S63 AMG Coupe	Apr 15	\$408,610 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	900/2250	rear	1995	216	4.2	-	10.2	Full fat S63 AMG is a more potent package Brutal acceleration; amazing comfort; superb interior
★★★★ S65 AMG Coupe	-	\$498,610 (7a)	VI2/6.0TT	463/5400	1000/2300	rear	2110	219	4.1	-	12.0	Needs a better gearbox; munches tyres S Coupe gets a massive performance injection
* * * * * ☆ ☆ C250 Coupe	Mar 13	\$70,400 (7a)	14/1.8T	150/5500	310/2300	rear	1475	102	8.02	15.78	10.9	The 63's the smarter pick Surprisingly sweet package; great ride and handling
★★★☆☆ C350 Coupe	ma is	\$99,545 (7a)	V6/3.5		370/3500	rear	1540		6.0	_	7.9	Should be faster; chassis could easily handle more power Snarling six-cylinder really shifts hard
***					480/1400		1650		5.2	_	7.5	Not as balanced as C250, nor its BMW 435i rival
E400 Coupe		\$130,900 (7a)										Replaces E500; just as fast, much cheaper Much more a tourer than sportster, but ride isn't great
E400 Cabriolet ★★☆☆		\$143,510 (7a)	V6/3.0TT		480/1400			138	5.3	-	7.7	Perfect for a summer's day cruise Keen drivers will definitely look elsewhere, like a Boxster S
SLK350 ★★★☆☆		\$124,380 (7a)	V6/3.5	225/6500	370/3500	rear	1465	154	5.6	-	8.0	 Lovely engine note and plenty of performance Unforgiving ride; can't disable ESP; not super stiff
SLK55 AMG ★★★☆☆	Jan 13	\$161,510 (7a)	V8/5.5	310/6800	540/4500	rear	1535	202	5.24	13.25	8.5	 Unique atmo V8 sounds the business Ride can be harsh and handling feels mismatched
\$L500 ★★★☆☆		\$307,110 (7a)	V8/4.7TT	320/5250	700/1800	rear	1710	187	4.6	-	9.4	 All-aluminium platform cuts weight, improves handling But ride quality isn't exactly plush and it's no looker, either
SL63 AMG	Oct 15	\$398,610 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	900/2250	rear	1770	243	4.2	-	10.2	Perfect combination of performance and luxury Some creaks from the bodyshell; interior needs a refresh
SL65 AMG	May 14	\$482,610 (7a)	V12/6.0TT	463/4800	1000/2300	rear	1875	247	4.0	-	11.7	Hilarious performance; more agile than you'd expect Lacks the theatre of the SL63; it's super pricey
	Nov 15	\$80,040 (7dc)	14/2.0T	265/6000	450/2250	all	1510	175	4.89	13.07	7.5	Roomier and more comfortable than the lumpy A45 Not particularly attractive; gearbox isn't the best
GLE 63 AMG S	Jan 16	\$189,900 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5750	760/1750	all	2270	189	4.2	-	18.6	Insane performance; hilarious noise; huge character Bit of a wobbly handler; interior a little off the pace
63 AMG S coupe		\$198,900 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	430/5500	760/1750	all	2275	189	4.2	-	11.9	Thunderous alternative to the X6M Flawed concept, if you ask us; polarising looks
GL63 AMG		\$214,510 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	410/5250	760/2000	all	2505	164	4.9	-	12.3	Need to move seven people at high speed? Here you go
G63 AMG	Jul 14	\$233,910 (7a)	V8/5.5TT	400/5500	760/2000	all	2475	161	5.4	-	13.8	Needs to tow a fuel tanker around behind it There is no reason why this thing should exist
	Sep 15	\$294,610 (7dc)	V8/4.0TT	375/6250	650/1750	rear	1570	239	3.8	-	9.4	But we're very glad it does Excellent chassis mated to a brilliant engine
****												● Makes the comparable Jaguar F-Type R seem cheap
= MINI)=	Mi	ini										www.mini.com.a
Cooper S ★★★☆	Dec 14	\$36,950 (6m) \$39,300 (6a)	14/2.0T	141/4700	280(300) /1250	front	1160	121	6.70	14.70	5.9	Solves all the old model's problems but creates a new one it's not as engaging; needs better tyres
Cooper S 5-door		\$38,050 (6m) \$40,400 (6a)	14/2.0T	141/4700	280(300) /1250	front	1220	116	6.9	-	6.0	● A slightly smaller alternative to a Golf GTI ● Extra 60kg means it's not mini in any sense
Cooper JCW ★★★☆	Jan 16	\$47,400 (6m) \$49,950 (6a)	14/2.0T	170/6000	320/1250	front	1205	141	6.3	-	6.0	• More power than ever before; playful handling • Has it retained its hardcore edge?
Cabrio JCW	T	\$58,500 (6m)	14/1.6T	155/600	260/1850	front	1240	125	6.9	-	6.9	Same great engine as the JCW hatch Same dynamic problems as the Cabrio S
Coupe JCW	Sep 12	\$52,600 (6m)	14/1.6T	155/5500	260/1600	front	1225	127	6.92	14.79	5.8	Mini driving experience turned up to 11 Buy a Megane RS275 instead; you'll thank us
**************************************		\$55,100 (6m)	14/1.6T	155/6000	280/1900	front	1195	130	6.7	-	7.3	Grippy and playful; manic fun on the right road
★★★☆☆ Countryman JCW		\$56,900 (6m)	14/1.6T	160/6000	280/1900	all	1405	114	7.0	-	8.0	You're not on the right road very often Kinda makes sense; a Mini with room for space for four
★★☆☆ Paceman JCW		\$56,900 (6m)	14/1.6T	160/6000	280/1900	all	1400	114	6.9	-	8.0	Not really a Mini, is it? Only just fast enough as a JCW Surprising fun to drive; looks good as a JCW
***												● That price! And they say the Germans can't do comedy
	Mi	itsubisl	ni							W	WV	w.mitsubishi-motors.com.a
ncer Evolution X	Sep 08	\$52,990 (5m)	14/2.0T	217/6500	366/3500	all	1490	146	5.59	13.90	10.3	Much more livable car than the hardcore IX Manual version hobbled by ludicrous gearing
Evolution X MR	Dec 13	\$58,990 (6dc)	14/2.0T	217/6500	366/3500	all	1540	141	5.3	13.6	10.6	SST 'box works well when you're driving hardbut less impressive day-to-day
n X Final Edition		\$53,700 (5m)	14/2.0T	226/6500	414/3500	all	1570	144	-	-	10.2	Best ever Evolution X marks the end of a venerated legend
****	M	ordan										-
	Ŭ(organ	1/.00	02/6000	122 /5000	****	705	102	0.0		6 /	www.morgancars.com.at
4/4 ★★★☆☆		\$95,800 (5m)	14/1.6	82/6000	132/5800	rear	795	103	8.0	-	6.4	Ye olde charm; definitely a unique driving experience You're essentially buying a brand new antique



	MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
	3 Wheeler		\$97,500 (5m)	V2/2.0	60/5250	140/3250	rear	550	220	6.0	-	9.3	● An utterly unique driving experience ● You're either going to love it or hate it
	Plus 4		\$106,500 (5m)	14/2.0	115/6000	201/4500	rear	877	117	7.3	-	7.0	Ye olde charm; definitely a unique driving experience You're essentially buying a brand new antique
	Roadster		\$143,000 (6m)	V6/3.7	209/6000	370/4700	rear	950	220	5.5	-	9.8	Power-to-weight rivals a 911 Carrera S You'd really have to love it to live with it
	Plus 8 ★★★☆		\$254,000 (6m/8a)	V8/4.8	270/6300	490/3400	rear	1100	246	4.2	-	10.8	Fabulous drivetrain package; fun on smooth surfaces Quality fails to match the pricetag
		Ni	ssan										www.nissan.com.au
		Jul 14	\$25,090 (6m) \$28,490 (cvt)	14/1.6T	140/5600	240/2000	front	1340*	104*	7.80	15.56	8.9	● A famous hot hatch nameplate returns ● Shame it's not attached to something more inspiring
	* ★★ ☆☆ 370Z	Sep 10	\$56,930 (6m)	V6/3.7	245/7000	363/5200	rear	1468	162	5.85	14.04	10.4	Lighter and sharper than its 350Z predecessor
	★★★☆☆ 370Z Roadster		\$59,930 (7a) \$65,930 (6m)	V6/3.7	245/7000	363/5200	rear	1478	229	5.8	-	10.9*	 Agricultural engine; snappy handling; gets hot on track Suffers little in the conversion to drop-top
	★★★☆☆ GT-R	Jul 14	\$68,930 (7a) \$172,000 (6dc)	V6/3.8TT	404/6400	628/3200	all	1730	234	2.7	-	11.7	 But it doesn't add anything to the recipe, either MY14 means the GT-R finally rides properly
	****												Still pretty agricultural; just starting to feel its age
	78		ugeot										www.peugeot.com.au
	208 GTi ★★★☆	Jan 16	\$29,990 (6m)	14/1.6T	153/6000	300/3000	front	1160	127	6.8		5.4	Recently updated with lots more power Superb rivals highlight its flaws; odd driving position
	208 30th Anniv. ★★★☆	Oct 15	\$35,990 (6m)	14/1.6T		300/1700	front	1185	129	6.63		5.4	 Better than the base car in every single way Only 26 came to Oz, and they're all snapped up
	308 GT ★★★☆	Oct 15	\$41,990 (6m)	14/1.6T	151/5000	285/1750	front	1200	126	7.70	15.50	5.6	Handsome looks; drives well; loaded with kit Not fast enough for the money; ride issues
		Po	rsche										www.porsche.com.au
	Boxster		\$104,500 (6m) \$109,690 (7dc)	F6/2.7	195/6700	280/4500	rear	1340*	146*	5.7*	-	7.7*	There's a reason the Boxster is the drop-top benchmark It's not really that quick; you'll wish you bought the S
	Boxster S	Jun 13	\$130,100 (6m) \$136,090 (7dc)	F6/3.4	232/6700	360/4500	rear	1350*	172*	4.55*	12.74	7.7*	Gets the grunt to make the most of the sublime chassis Could still handle another 50kW. no sweat
	Boxster GTS	Apr 15	\$148,200 (6m) \$153,990 (7dc)	F6/3.4	243/6700	370/4500	rear	1375*	177	5.11*	13.29*	8.2*	Small tweaks take it even closer to perfection Not much, really; could easily handle more power
	Boxster Spyder	Sep 15		F6/3.8	276/6700	420/4750	rear	1315	210	4.5	12.7	9.9	Bigger 3.8-litre six suggests it's an open top GT4 Lacks the full gamut of the GT4's chassis upgrades
	Cayman ★★★☆		\$106,200 (6m) \$111,190 (7dc)	F6/27	202/7400	290/4500	rear	1340*	151*	5.6*	-	7.7*	Steering and gearshift have few equals; sweet 2.7 engine You have to be going mega fast to really feel involved
	Cayman S	Jan 14	\$139,000 (6m) \$143,990 (7dc)	F6/3.4	239/7400	370/4500	rear	1350*	177*	5.10	13.24	8.0	One of the top few drivers' cars on the planet Manual gearing is stupidly long, other than that it's perfect
4	Cayman GTS	Jan 15		F6/3.4	250/7400	380/4750	rear	1375*	182	4.49*	12.66*	13.2*	A sublime drivers' car made even better Getting pricey, yet still great value. Go figure
4	2222	Jan 16	\$189,900 (6m)	F6/3.8	283/7400	420/4750	rear	1340	212	4.4	-	10.3	Might just be the best driver's car in the world Limited to how many can be built, and almost all are gone
	911 Carrera		\$208,200 (7m) \$214,150 (7dc)	F6/3.4	257/7400	390/5600	rear	1400*	174*	4.6*	-	8.2*	All-new 911 moves the game on even further Lacks firepower; seven-speed manual not Porsche's best
	911 Carrera S	Jan 13	\$244,800 (7m) \$250,750 (7dc)	F6/3.8	294/7400	440/5600	rear	1415*	208*	4.08*	12.09*	9.5*	Our 2012 PCOTY winner is superb in almost every way PDK shift paddles don't come standard
#	911 Carrera GTS	May 15		F6/3.8	316/7500	440/5750	rear	1425	222	4.4	-	9.5	GTS likely to be pick of the bunch once again Firm, there's got to be something
513	911 Carrera 4		\$223,900 (7m) \$229,850 (7dc)	F6/3.6	257/7400	390/5600	all	1430	179	4.9	-	9.3	All-wheel drive means you can drive your 911 to the snow
	911 Carrera 4S	Jul 13	\$260,500 (7m) \$266,450 (7dc)	F6/3.8	294/7400	440/5600	all	1465*	201*	4.19	12.19	9.1	■ Big grip fills in the holes of your skill set ■ Only real reason you need it over the regular car
	911 Carrera 4 GTS			F6/3.8	316/7500	440/5750	all	1470	215	4.4	-	9.9	● For 911 fans that want some added security ■ Nudging GT3 money, though it's a different sort of car
	911 Carrera Cabriolet		\$229,500 (7m) \$235,450 (7dc)	F6/3.4	257/7400	390/5600	rear	1470*	175*	4.8*	-	8.4	● Almost as good to drive as the coupe ● Suffers from image problems
	911 Carrera S Cabriolet		\$268,800 (7m) \$272,750 (7dc)	F6/3.8	294/7400	440/5600	rear	1485*	198	4.5*	-	8.9*	Better access to the exhaust pops and crackles Aston provides a more theatrical experience
	911 Carrera GTS Cabriolet ★★★☆		\$289,300 (7m) \$296,690 (7dc)	F6/3.8	316/7500	440/5750	rear	1495	211	4.6	-	9.7	Perfect weekend-away car Gives off a slight boulevard cruiser image
	911 Carrera 4 Cabriolet ★★★☆		\$245,200 (7m) \$251,150 (7dc)	F6/3.4	257/7400	390/5600	all	1500	171	5.1	-	9.5	Best of all worlds: safety, performance, class, bling Getting burnt by an Audi S3 at the lights
	911 Carrera 4S Cabriolet ★★★☆			F6/3.8	294/7400	440/5600	all	1535*	192	4.5*	-	9.2*	● A great car in so many ways ■ You could have a GT3 at this price!
9:	11 Carrera 4 GTS Cabriolet ★★★☆		\$304,900 (7m) \$312,290 (7dc)	F6/3.8	316/7500	440/5750	all	1540	205	4.6	-	10.0	● The best open-top 911 bar the Turbo ● You could buy a Boxster GTS and Cayman GTS
	Porsche 911 Targa 4	Jun 14		F6/3.4	257/7400	390/5600	all	1540	167	5.2	-	9.5	Old-school charm, new-school stonk Self-folding targa top isn't very retro
	Porsche 911 Targa 4S	Jun 14	\$286,800 (7m) \$292,750 (7dc)	F6/3.8	294/7400	440/5600	all	1555	189	4.8	-	10.0	Extra power adds to its touring appeal Regular Cab S wants \$20K less
	Porsche 911 Targa 4 GTS		\$304,900 (7m) \$310,210 (7dc)	F6/3.8	316/7500	440/5750	all	1560	202	4.7	-	10.0	■ Taking the Targa concept to the ultimate level ■ GTS badge better experienced in hard-top form
*		Dec 15	\$293,200 (7dc)	F6/3.8	350/8250	440/6250	rear	1430*	244*	3.5	-	12.4	olt's got everything; track car perfection old t's quite big now; very slight loss of character

TOP 3

WAGONs



Merc-AMG C63 S \$157,010 Love it, love it, love it



Audi RS6 Avant \$225,000 Currently the best RS



HSV Clubsport R8 LSA Tourer \$85,990 Coolest Aussie car?

Hot Source

Fast guide to quick cars

TOP 3

DROP TOPS UNDER \$150K



Porsche Boxster \$102,800 Better than ever



Lotus Exige S \$132,990 Compromised, but massive fun



\$119,080Manual 'box brings with it proper fun



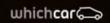
Audi's super TT
WHEREVER there's an
Audi, an S variant will
follow. And now, such
prophecy has been
fulfilled for the TT model
range, which welcomes
the all-wheel drive TTS.
In third-gen guise it's
much faster than old
and still under \$100K.
Unfortunately, it's no
longer offered with a
manual transmission.

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MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
911 GT3 RS ★★★★	Jul 15	\$387,300 (7dc)	F6/4.0	368/8250	460/6250	rear	1420	259	3.3	-	12.7	● The 4.0-litre returns in the most fierce 911 ● Hard to justify the extra \$90K over the GT3; all sold
911 Turbo ★★★★	Jan 15	\$366,100 (7dc)	F6/3.8TT	383/6500	660/1950	all	1595	196	3.00	10.95	15.2	● We didn't know cars could be this fast and capable ● With Australia's speed limits it's almost a waste
911 Turbo S ★★★★★	May 14	\$444,500 (7dc)	F6/3.8TT	412/6750	750/2200	all	1605	259	3.1	-	9.7	Somehow even faster than the base car Who on earth is demanding a faster 911 Turbo?
911 Turbo Cabriolet ★★★★☆		\$396,000 (7dc)	F6/3.8TT	383/6500	660/1950	all	1665	196	3.5	-	9.9	 The ultimate hair dryer; still insanely fast There are far more characterful cabriolets at this price
911 Turbo S Cabriolet ★★★★☆		\$466,500 (7dc)	F6/3.8TT	412/6750	750/2200	all	1675	259	3.2	-	9.9	 A good way to show off the size of your bank balance Struggling to see the point; frightening price tag
Panamera S ★★★☆		\$288,500 (7dc)	V6/3.0TT	309/6000	520/1750	rear	1810	171	5.1	-	8.7	Blown V6 just as quick and slurps much less Can't replace the awesome note of the V8
Panamera 4S ★★★★☆		\$300,700 (7dc)	V6/3.0TT	309/6000	520/1750	all	1870	165	4.8	-	8.9	● Faster against the clock than the rear-driver ● All-wheel drive of questionable relevance in Australia
Panamera GTS ★★★★☆		\$319,700 (7dc)	V8/4.8	324/6700	520/1750	all	1870	165	4.4	-	10.7	●Stunning dynamics; awesome engine note; driver's limo ●Looks expensive next to E63 and M5
Panamera Turbo ★★★★☆		\$383,000 (7dc)	V8/4.8TT	382/6000	700/2250	all	1970	194	4.1	-	10.2	 Crushing performance; cosseting luxury for four The GTS is a sharper, more involving drive
Panamera Turbo S ★★★★	Dec 14	\$443,200 (7dc)	V8/4.8TT	419/6000	750/2250	all	1995	210	3.8	-	10.2	 Sickeningly fast in a straight line; amazingly agile Call it half a million with options; diminishing returns
Macan Turbo ★★★☆	Aug 14	\$125,800 (7dc)	V6/3.6TT	294/6000	550/1350	all	1925	153	4.8	-	9.2	 Drives like a 911 on stilts almost Lacking engine note; bit of low-down lag
Cayenne S Diesel ★★★☆	Feb 15	\$144,600 (8a)	V8/4.2TD	283/3750	850/2000	all	2215	128	5.7	-	8.3	 Incredible diesel grunt; reasonably priced against rivals ■ We still have problems with the term 'sports diesel SUV'
Cayenne GTS ★★★☆	May 15	\$155,000 (8a)	V6/3.6TT	324/6000	600/1600	all	2110	154	5.2	-	10.0	Pace and incredible dynamics for an off-roader New blown V6 can't match the acoustics of the old V8
Cayenne Turbo ★★★☆	Feb 15	\$228,700 (8a)	V8/4.8TT	382/6000	750/2250	all	2185	175	4.7	-	11.5	Like driving a rocket-powered block of flats Cayenne's underpinnings are aging
Cayenne Turbo S ★★★☆	Apr 15	\$284,300 (8a)	V8/4.8TT	419/6000	800/2500	all	2235	187	4.7	-	11.5	●Like driving a rocket-powered block of flats ●Cayenne's underpinnings are aging
TANO												

LAND - - ROVER	Ra	nge Ro	ver									www.landrover.com.a
Evoque Dynamic Si4	May 14	\$80,605 (9a)	14/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	all	1640	107	-	-	13.6	○Concept-car looks; classy interior; drives well ○ Try seeing out of it; terrifying options lists
Sport HSE Dynamic ★★★☆	Jan 14	\$168,210 (8a)	V8/5.0S	375/6500	625/2500	all	2310	162	5.3	-	13.8	●Great handling; wonderful engine; looks much better●Some will see it as the 'poor man's' Range Rover
Sport Autobiog Dynamic	Jan 14	\$191,510 (8a)	V8/5.0S	375/6500	625/2500	all	2310	162	5.3	-	13.8	Drives like a hot hatch; goes like a scalded catVery little; thirsty, and off-road ability wasted on most
Sport SVR ★★★★☆		\$224,110 (8a)	V8/5.0S	405/6500	680/2500	all	2310	175	4.7	-	13.8	Amazing on-road ability for an SUVIs this performance 4x4 thing getting a bit silly?
SDV8 Autobiography ★★★☆		\$240,310 (8a)	V8/4.4TTD	250/3500	700/1750	all	2360	108	6.9	-	8.7	 Diesel V8 perfect fit for the Rangie's calming character Huge weight saving, but still incredibly big and heavy
5.0 SC Autobiography ★★★★☆	Jan 14	\$253,110 (8a)	V8/5.0S	375/6500	720/3500	all	2330	161	5.4	-	13.8	● An off-road S-Class; incredible ride and feel-good factor ● Fuel tank seems to have a hole in it; poor people hate you

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	Re	nault										www.renault.com.au
Clio R.S 200 Sport ★★★☆	Oct 15	\$29,490 (6dc)	14/1.6T	147/6000	240/1750	front	1218	121	6.93	14.95	6.3	Cult classic returns at a bargain price; five-door practicality Lost its hero appeal; sadly no manual option
Clio R.S 200 Cup ★★★☆	Apr 14	\$31,990 (6dc)	14/1.6T	147/6000	240/1750	front	1218	121	6.75	14.91	6.3	Likes to wag its tail; zesty drivetrain Sounds like a vacuum on boost; shift paddles feel arcadish
Clio R.S 200 Sport Premium ★★★☆		\$34,990 (6dc)	14/1.6T	147/6000	240/1750	front	1218	121	6.7	-	6.3	© Extra kit (seats, 18s, RS drive) adds extra class ● Price gains a couple of waist sizes
Clio R.S 200 Cup Premium	Jan 15	\$37,490 (6dc)	14/1.6T	147/6000	240/1750	front	1218	121	7.14	15.21	9.6	You won't be disappointed by the range-topperuntil you realise \$37K's not far off an SS, GTI, Megane
Megane GT220 ★★★☆	Oct 15	\$35,990 (6m)	14/2.0T	162/4750	340/2400	front	1388	225	7.05	14.98	7.3	 Sharpened French wagon promises to be an RS-lite Unkillable ESP means it fails to deliver on the promise
Megane RS 265 ★★★☆	Oct 15	\$43,990 (6m)	14/2.0T	195/5500	360/3000	front	1374	142	5.86	13.86	8.7	 Incredible driving experience; supercar slayer Pretty difficult to live with day-to-day
Megane RS 275 Premium ★★★☆		\$52,990 (6m)	14/2.0T	201/5500	360/3000	front	1376	146	6.0	-	7.5	 One of the greatest hot hatch experiences intensified Questionable whether it's worth the extra coin
Megane RS 275 Trophy-R ★★★★		\$61,990 (6m)	14/2.0T	201/5500	360/3000	front	1297	155	6.16	14.15	7.5	The most hardcore hot-hatch ever sold in Oz You're going to need to be committed to drive it every day
D												11

K	Ro	lls-Roy	ce							W	W	w.rolls-roycemotorcars.com
Ghost Series II ★★★★	Feb 15	\$595,000 (8a)	V12/6.6TT	420/5250	780/1500	rear	2360	178	4.9	-		Quicker and sportier than a Phantom, but no less opulent What's the point of a sportier, faster Rolls Royce?
Ghost EWB Series II ★★★★		\$645,000 (8a)	V12/6.6TT	420/5250	780/1500	rear	2450	171	5.0	-	14.1	 Even more luxurious with added rear seat space For those who prefer someone else to do the driving
Wraith ★★★★	Dec 14	\$645,000 (8a)	V12/6.6TT	465/5600	800/1500	rear	2360	197	4.6	-	14.0	 Incredible comfort and luxury; traffic-stopping styling Definitely no driver's car; you'll want the Phantom
Phantom Series II ★★★★		\$855,000 (8a)	V12/6.7	338/5350	720/3500	rear	2560	132	5.9	-	14.8	The benchmark luxury car for the last decadeIt's simply enormous; Kyle Sandilands has one
Phantom Coupe ★★★★		\$995,000 (8a)	V12/6.8	338/5350	720/3500	rear	2580	131	5.8	-	14.8	 For the billionaires who want to drive themselves Billionaires will be the only ones to experience it
Phantom Drophead ★★★★		\$1,075,000 (8a)	V12/6.8	338/5350	720/3500	rear	2630	129	5.8	-		Simply the flashiest, most extravagant car on the road ●The price tag, but if you have to ask



MODEL	TESTED	PRICE	ENGINE	KW/RPM	NM/RPM	DRIVE	KERB KG	KW/TONNE	0-100 KM/H	0-400M	FUEL CONS	PROS & CONS
(1)	Sk	oda										www.skoda.com.au
Octavia RS	Nov 14	\$37,590 (6m) \$39,890 (6dc)	14/2.0T	162/6200	350/1500	front	1350	118	6.30	14.60	7.7	 Affordable mix of performance, handling and practicality Optional six-speed DSG doesn't cut it, get the manual
Octavia RS Wagon	May 14	\$39,090 (6m) \$41,390 (6dc)	14/2.0T	162/6200	350/1500	front	1372	118	6.9	-	7.7	As per sedan, but cranks the practicality factor up to 11 Everybody will think you're a soccer mum
(+ + + +)	Su	baru					Ī				Ī	www.subaru.com.au
WRX		\$38,990 (6m)	F4/2.0T	197/5600	350/2400	all	1424	138	6.08	14.15	9.2	• Has rediscovered its harder edge; entertaining handling
★★★☆ WRX Premium	May 14	\$40,990 (cvt) \$44,890 (6m)	F4/2.0T	197/5600	350/2400	all	1424	138	6.24	14.27	9.2	Lumpy power curve, firm ride, offers little that's newExtra kit makes the WRX a more habitable place
	May 15	\$46,890 (cvt) \$49,490 (6m)	F4/25T	221/6000	407/4000	all	1515	146	5.40	13.49	12.1	Not really what the WRX has traditionally been about OLooks tough; handling prowess; bargain pricetag
★★★☆ WRX STi Premium		\$55,390 (6m)	F4/25T	221/6000	407/4000	all	1515	146	4.9	-	10.4	
***** Liberty 3.6R		\$41,990 (cvt)	F6/3.6	191/5600	350/4400	all	1605	119	7.2	-	10.3	Not actually any faster than the last STi Far cheaper than the old one; segment-crushing power
**** Forester XT		\$40,990 (cvt)	F4/20T	177/5600	350/2400	all	1589	111	7.5		8.5	Feels quite big; lost a lot of its sporting character Much improved handling and refinement
* * * ☆ ☆ ☆ BRZ * * * * * *	Jan 13	\$37,150 DA (6m) \$39,730 DA (6a)	F4/2.0	147/7000	205/6600	rear	1216	121	6.93	14.94	7.8	 Stripped of all its character; no manual option Looks better than the Toyota; exclusivity; handling balance Oversteer junkies will prefer the more wayward 86
•	Su	zuki										www.suzuki.com.au
Swift Sport		\$24,990 (6m)	14/1.6	100/6900	160/4400	front	1060	94	8.50	16.16	6.1*	• Excellent chassis; strong brakes; revvy engine
****		\$26,490 (cvt)										Not as cheap as it used to be; un-killable ESP dulls fun
	Te	sla										www.teslamotors.com
Model \$ 70D ★★★☆		\$131,487 DA (1a)	DualEM	245	550	all	2090	117	5.4	-	0.0	A spacious, fast, technological force Charge time will scare off anyone but early adopters
Model S 85 ★★★☆☆		\$132,719 DA (1a)	SingleEM	270	440	rear	2100	129	5.6	-	0.0	Rear-drive purity matched to electric punch Lacks the launch ferocity of dual motors
Model S 85D ★★★☆		\$151,865 DA (1a)		315	600	all	2190		4.6	-	0.0	Baby dual-motor monster enters AMG/RS/M territory Won't scare passengers like a P85D
Model S P85D ★★★☆	Jul 15	\$191,250 DA (1a)	DualEM	515	931	all	2204	234	3.4	11.7	0.0	 Dual electric motors provide head-smashing acceleration Needs the infrastructure to support it; a bit odd to drive
(4)	To	yota										www.toyota.com.au
Corolla Levin ZR	Jun 13	\$28,490 (6m) \$30,790 (6a)	14/1.8	103/6400	173/4000	front	1255	82	9.24	16.87	7.1	 Shock! A Corolla that's half decent to drive (in manual guise) Outclassed and out-gunned by cheaper rivals
86 GT ★★★☆	Aug 12	\$29,990 (6m) \$32,490 (6a)	F4/20	147/7000	205/6400	rear	1257	117	7.6	-	7.8	As much fun as you can have in a car, regardless of price Interior is basic; road noise; ride can get irritating
	Dec 15	\$35,990 (6m) \$38,490 (6a)	F4/2.0	147/7000	205/6400	rear	1275	116	6.96	14.93	7.8	©Extra kit makes the 86 a more livable proposition ©Lumpy power curve; needs more mid-range
	Vo	lkswag	en									www.volkswagen.com.au
Polo GTI		\$27,490 (6m)	14/1.8T	141/6200	320/1450	front	1234	144	6.36	14.61	6.1	• An even better BFYB proposition in its new form; price
★★★☆ Golf GTI	Jul 15	\$29,990 (7dc) \$40,990 (6m)	14/2.0T	162/6200	350/1500	front	1324	122	6.27*	14.46*	11.3*	New electric steering loses out to the old hydraulic system More refined and sharper to drive than ever
★★★★ Golf GTI Performance	Nov 14	\$43,490 (6dc) \$46,490 (6dc)	14/2.0T	169/6200	350/1500	front	1364	124	6.80	14.90	6.6	Conservative looks; can't disable ESP; traction issues Tricky diff, bigger brakes and more power prove deadly
* * * * * ☆ Golf R * * * * * *	Nov 15	\$52,740 (6m) \$55,240 (6dc)	14/2.0T	206/6200	380/1800	all	1435	144	4.95*	13.24*	10.4*	No manual or ESC off douses potential as a true driver's car Faster and easier than ever before; beefy engine note No manual yet; not sold on its new outfit
★★★★ Golf R Wagon ★★★★☆	Ħ	\$58,990 (6dc)	14/2.0T	206/6200	380/1800	all	1509	137	5.2	-	7.1	Extra practicality for little pace penalty; sounds angrier Another 70kg isn't ideal; no manual option
Scirocco R	Sep 12	\$45,990 (6m) \$48,490 (6dc)	14/2.0T	188/6000	330/2500	front	1351	139	6.30	14.19	8.1	More agile and much better looking than a Golf R Driving it really hard exposes a few chinks in its armour
CC V6 FSI		\$66,990 (6dc)	V6/3.6	220/6600	350/2400	all	1657	133	5.5	-	9.7	Six-pot CC pretty much a Merc CLS for third of the price Lack of rear headroom and rear seat access
	Vo	lvo										www.volvocars.com.au
V40 T5 R-Design		\$50,400 (6a)	14/2.0T	180/5400	360/1800	front	1468	127	6.91	15.02	8.1	•Punchy four pot; pleasing dynamics; looks
★★★☆☆ S60 T6 R-Design	Sep 14	\$71,600 (6a)	16/3.0T	242/5400	480/3000	all	1684	144	5.7	-	10.2	Heavy; firm ride; cramped rear room Quick and comfortable all-weather performance sedan
* * * ☆ ☆ \$60 Polestar * * * * * ☆ ☆	Dec 14	\$99,600 (6a)	16/3.0T	257/5250	500/3000	all	1770	145	5.39	13.58	13.4	Safety systems make the dash flash like a night club MY14 addresses brake and ergonomic issues
												Still costs too much; ride is too firm

TOP 3

DROP TOPS OVER \$150K



Ferrari California T \$409,888 A fine Italian cruiser



M-B SL63 AMG \$399,000 Roofless thunder



Porsche 911 Targa 4S \$287,200 Retro style, modern speed

Weird world of fast cars

Cars We Don't Get

We're spoilt for fast imported metal, but there are some gems we miss out on



Fresh out of the local lunatic asylum, you need only do the maths to get an idea of the 'fastest Caterham road car ever': 231kW plus 545kg equals 0-97km/h in 2.8sec. Six-speed sequential 'box needed to tame the 2.0-litre blown four-pot.



Why is this car not made in right-hand drive? That is the question. In SS guise, Chevy's new Mustang-mauler scores the 6.2-litre LT1 V8, with 339kW, and in auto trim does 0-97km/h in 4.0sec. It looks tough and costs \$52K in the States.



Remember the Toyota MR2? This could be its successor of sorts, if it ever leaves Japan. Honda's tiny S660 cops a midmounted 660cc turbo 3-cyl, belting out – you sitting down? – 47kW and 104Nm. But it weighs 830kg. Would be a laugh.



We're in denial this car is even on this list, still reeling from the news Honda Australia isn't bringing its 228kW, 400Nm turbocharged, 'Ring-slaying hot hatch to Oz. A shame, but here's hoping they consider the next model come 2018.



Almost definitely the coolest Toyota you've never heard of, the manual, rear-drive, LSD-equipped Gazoo Racing-tuned Mark X GRMN takes its 236kW and 380Nm from a 3.5-litre V6, and turns rear tyres to smoke. Sadly, only 100 will be built, zero for Oz.



Thanks to Falcon, the Blue Oval has a special place in the heart of many Aussies. But with sadly no right-hand drive version planned, they'll never get to hear the 450-odd kW twin-turbo 3.5-litre V6 of Ford's new supercar in anger, at least locally.



Rumours still abound that a Corvette will come to Oz at some stage, but for now, we can only salivate over such things as the C7 Z06. Sporting 484kW from its LT4 6.2-litre blown V8, the Z06 does 0-97km/h in 2.95sec (!) and, in the USA, costs \$105K...



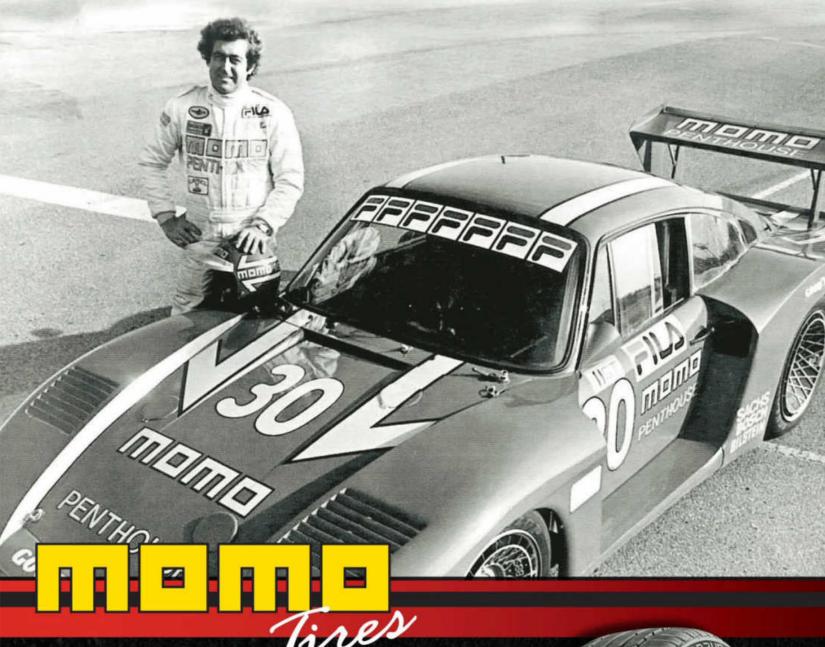
Yes, each day we thank the car gods the Mustang is even coming to Oz, but we still can't help but want the hero versions like the GT350R. Its 5.2-litre flatplane-crank V8 revs to a peaky, for a Yank V8, 8250rpm and makes 392kW. No right-hand drive.



The angriest WRX ever from the factory is bedecked in STI-branded goodies and comes with a 2.0-litre turbo flat-four (found only in Japanese STIs) but now with 241kW and 431Nm. Unfortunately the entire car is to be found only in Japan, too.

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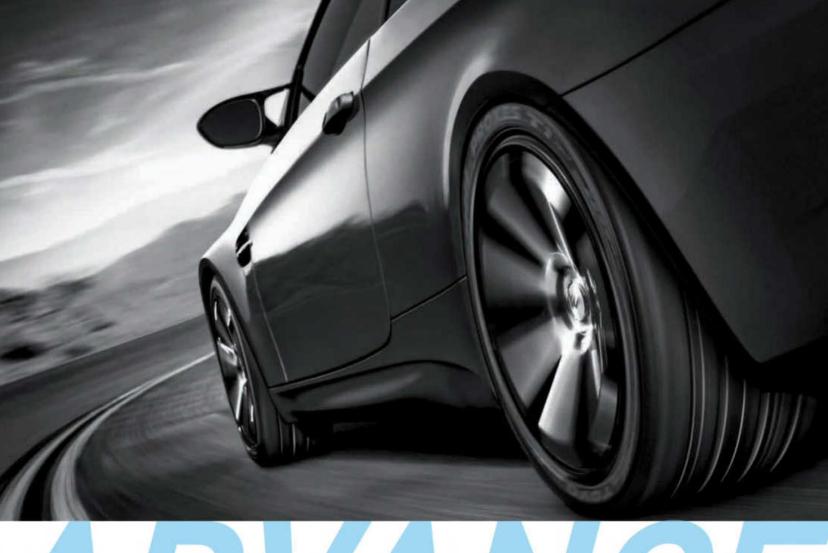
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